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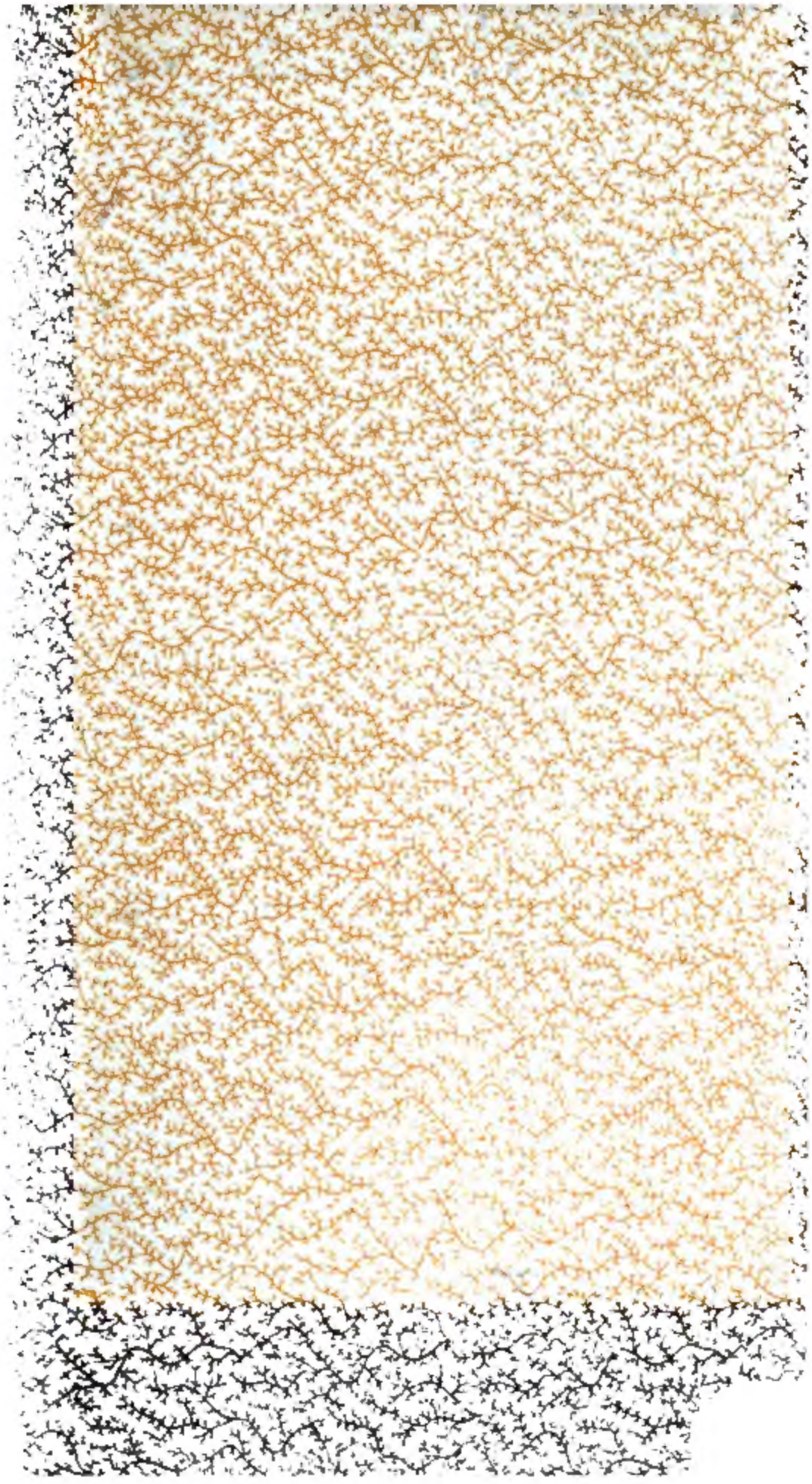

THE

TWO MENTORS:

A

MODERN STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE OLD ENGLISH BARON.

"A man cannot possess any thing better than a good woman,
"nor any thing worse than a bad one."

SIMONIDES.

Translated by Addison, Spectator, 209.

THE THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. MAWMAN, POULTRY.

1803.

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NEW YORK

Woodfall, Printer,
Paternoster-row.

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THE

TWO MENTORS:

A

MODERN STORY.

LETTER I.

RICHARD MUNDEN, ESQ. TO EDWARD SAVILLE, ESQ.

YOUNG MAN!

I TAKE it very ill that I have not heard from you since you left London!—Do not I stand in the place of a father to you?—Nay, have I not been *more* than a *father* to you: for I am no relation by blood, but your *guardian* only, and the friend of your deceased father?

First, I released you from the harsh discipline of a pedagogue, and forbade him to lash you into *learning*, alias *pedantry*: which only serves to narrow and depress the spirit of a gentleman, or else to make him conceited and overbearing.—Secondly, I followed you with my good offices afterwards, to mitigate the fatigues of education, and to make you an *accom-*

plished man, with as little trouble to yourself as possible.

From my first knowledge of you, I perceived that there were several obstacles in the way of my wishes for you.

First, an aspect of thoughtfulness and care, that gives you the air of a tradesman, instead of the *degagée* address of a fine gentleman; and, secondly, that mean, sneaking quality of bashfulness, which loses all your consequence in mixed company, and makes you appear like a school-boy trembling under the ferula. To remedy the last defect, I sent you to Westminster School, which has generally been an *effectual cure* for it; and I hoped an acquaintance with the *world* would wear off the first. In the next place, I sent you to Cambridge, not to study the *mathematics*, which are the *ton* of that place at this time; no, nor yet the *classics*, which are quite out of *fashion*; and still less *theology*, or the *civil law*:—no; Edward, my design was to introduce you to the acquaintance of the young men of fortune and fashion there, and to pave the way to your preferment in future, by making an interest with them.

From the *college*, I brought you to the *capital*, and introduced you into the world, recommending you to a polite circle of my friends there. Still I saw the first traces upon you; and my

friends saw it also.—This will not do for a man of the world, said a certain nobleman; this ward of yours has the air of a college pedant!—What shall I do with him, said I?—Carry the young man into the company of women of *taste* and *spirit*, who know *life* and all the *joys* of it, said my friend. It is *there* he must receive the *polish*, the *ton*, the *finishing* strokes of a fine gentleman. Give him lord *Chesterfield's* Letters to his Son; let him *study them closely*, they will do for him more than all your *schools* and *universities*.—I followed my friend's directions. He introduced me to Lady Belmour, as the person best qualified to give you this *polish* so much *wanted*, and so *indespensably* requisite. I carried you into her company, that she might observe your person and qualifications; she spoke better of both than I expected. "Saville is a fine young fellow," said she; "he wants only to converse with *our sex*, and to receive his *finishing* from *us*; send him to me for one summer, and I warrant I will give you a good account of him."

I accepted her offer with proper acknowledgments. She did you the honour to invite you with a party of her select friends to her country seat; a favour you received with the coldness of a Carthusian friar: however, you *obliged me*

so far as not to *refuse* it; and that gave me some *hopes* of you.

All these advantages have I thrown in your way, Edward; but it depends upon yourself to make a right application of them. You do not want understanding; otherwise I would not reason with you, and account for every step I have taken for your service.—I loved your father; I I am inclined to love you. I have no children, nor near relations.

Spell this, and put it together, if you have sense and spirit in you; but if you disappoint and disgrace me, look to it, Edward:—Your father was a man of spirit; he lived too fast for his health and fortune;—you have not yet begun to *live at all.*—Open your eyes to the happiness that awaits you:—the world and all its charms are before you: they invite your senses to enjoy them; and you ought to swim in your proper element.

Lady Belmour's house is the seat of pleasure:—the goddess of Love resides there in person; may she touch and polish your heart, and bless you with her kindest influence!—If you want money, let me know it; and your draft upon me shall be answered immediately.—Attend to Lady Belmour's advice and instructions. *Write* to me, or let me hear from *her*, that you are

all that *she* wishes you *to be*; and I will call myself your most affectionate friend and guardian,

RICHARD MUNDEN.

LETTER II.

THE REVEREND MR. JOHNSON TO EDWARD SAVILLE, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

THE pleasure I took in executing the office of college-tutor to you here, left an agreeable impression upon my mind.—The ingenuousness of your heart, and the sweetness of your disposition, engaged my affections to you at the *time*, and have made me interested in every thing that has befallen you since. I have made enquiry after your situation and conduct, and have gained intelligence of every step you have taken since you left college. Your Guardian—good heaven! what a guardian for a virtuous youth!—finding you have not acquired the *ton* of fashionable *life*, nor the spirit of vanity and dissipation, has sent you to Lady Belmour to finish your education, and to give you what he calls the POLISH of a *fine gentleman*.

I am told moreover, that you have not yet disgraced the character you acquired in the

early part of your life, that you have not quitted the path of virtue, and followed that of vice: but that you are in the situation of the young *Hercules*, balancing between *Virtue* and *Pleasure*.

From these circumstances I have formed a *wish* and a *hope*, that I might still be of some service to you; by shewing you the dangers that surround you, and pointing out the path whereby you may escape them. You are thrown upon the island of Calypso,—she orders her nymphs to spread their toils for you, and to exert all their wiles to ensnare you: nor is the goddess herself without attractions.

Sensual pleasure is an enchanted cup, it intoxicates the heart, and weakens the reason; while the soul is in the state of *inebriation*, all its nobler faculties are *suspended*, if not *lost*. The heart is insensibly corrupted and depraved; it loses by degrees all its finest perceptions, and at length becomes wholly immersed in grossness and brutality. Oh, Saville, was your heart made for such a state!—Does not your honest heart disdain the bondage?—I cannot believe those chains sit easy on you, till you tell me they do. If my conjectures and hopes are well founded, write to me, and either encourage or forbid my future admonitions.

Lady Belmour is the Priestess of Venus, she

is the convenient friend of both sexes.—She keeps a gaming-house all the winter in London, and is visited by people of *rank* and *character*, such as this age allows of:—in the summer she carries on her business in the country,—there she provides mistresses for youths of quality and fortune, and husbands for girls of fashionable education and doubtful virtue. Old jointured dowagers purchase young husbands, and toothless dotards young wives, through her mediation;—she condescends to accept a *consideration* for her profligate services. She has methodized pleasure into a *system*, and conducts her offices with an air of decorum and regularity, that conceals the deformity of vice from its deceived and captivated votaries.

Beware, oh beloved and amiable youth, of her seducing arts!—If you have hitherto avoided, make haste to escape them. If you have been betrayed into the snare, break your fetters before *habit* has *rivetted* them upon you.

I will pursue you with my friendship and counsel, till you refuse me with scorn and contempt;—till I am well assured, that you have given up your nobler hopes and virtuous prospects;—till you become the voluntary votary of vice and folly, I will call myself your affectionate friend, servant, and monitor,

JARVIS JOHNSON.

LETTER III.

MR. SAVILLE TO MR. JOHNSON.

SIR,

I HAVE been most agreeably surprized by a letter from my worthy tutor and friend Mr. Johnson, and still more gratified by the contents, upon which I have often meditated with renewed pleasure. Is it possible, that the qualities he imputes to me can have given me a place in his memory?—Oh no! It is his enlarged and benevolent soul, that, in pity to my youth and situation, has induced him to extend his hand to my assistance, in order to extricate me from the snares of vice and folly.

Thus do wise and good men give consequence to those they instruct, in order to lead them into the paths of virtue. A man who thinks himself unable to overcome temptation, will sink into inactivity and despondency; and he who is encouraged to exert his ability, will do it effectually.

Yes, my tutor, my friend, my monitor; I acknowledge the generous artifice you have used with me, which has answered your kind intention; by giving me credit with myself, you have encouraged me to aspire to your friendship. To whatever motive I am indebted for it, I re-

ceive it as a gift from heaven. I have often wished for such a friend, though I hardly dared to hope such an one would be granted me. You have held up the light of truth before my eyes, have shewn me the dangers that surround me, and directed me how to escape them.

I embrace your friendship with my whole heart?—Continue, dear Sir, your generous cares for me; I will be accountable to you for my future conduct; I will acquaint you with every step I take;—both my actions and motives shall be open to your inspection; you shall be to me as a second conscience, and your admonitions shall encourage or restrain all my undertakings. What *Sylph*, or what *Genius*, gives you intelligence of every thing that happens to me?—It is a *good spirit*, I am certain, because it is one of your *familiars*. He tells you the truth, when he compares this mansion to Calypso's island; and yet I think it still more resembles the Isle of Cyprus.—The nymphs and swains here breathe that air of softness and voluptuousness which is so contagious to all who encourage its influence. I have hitherto resisted the charm; but how long I should have continued to do so, is uncertain. My heart, at times, seemed ready to give way; but you have held over me the shield of Minerva; the enchantment is dissolved, and I feel myself delivered.

As the first proof of that *ingenuousness*, which indeed is the only quality I presume to claim as *my own*, I send you inclosed a letter I have lately received from *my virtuous* guardian. My heart rises with indignation, mingled with contempt, whenever I think on *him* and his *instructions* to me. His company and advice misled my father into courses which brought upon him both shame and sorrow. Upon his death-bed, he severely repented the sins and follies of a life spent unprofitably to himself and others. I have often wondered that he did not *alter his will*, which gave *this man* the care of my person and fortune, who ever since has been labouring to contaminate my mind with his own vile principles. God of his goodness gave me a wise and virtuous mother, the greatest blessing a child can receive. Her precepts were the guide of my childhood, and her remembrance will ever be sacred to me.

My mother was the *victim* of my father's irregularities, and she died praying for his reformation. She also prayed that I might be preserved from the contagion of a *bad example*. My father laughed at her *prayers*, and *predictions*, and *prophecies*, as he then called them; and for several years entirely forgot *them*, and the *dear saint* that uttered them; but in the days of his *last sickness* they *rushed* into his *memory*, to his bitter grief

and regret, and *reproached* him with his past conduct. He *then* spoke of my *mother* as a *superior being*; he lamented his cruel and ungenerous behaviour to her; he exhorted me to follow *her example*, and to *avoid* his own; by this circumstance, *my opinions* and *principles* received their *confirmation*.

She was taken from me too soon, or she would have been my director and monitor to this hour. But to supply her loss, Heaven has sent me a preceptor and friend in Mr. Johnson; by his advice and assistance I trust I shall escape the labyrinth of vice and folly, into which *Munden* and his *emissaries* have brought me.

I will tell you, my dear Sir, all that has passed here lately, if you can think it worth your attention; when you shall be acquainted with all the circumstances of my present situation, you will give me your advice upon it.—If you judge it necessary, I will immediately burst the bands that keep me here, and come to you at Cambridge: but I have either *convinced* or *persuaded* myself, that though I dwell in the land of vice and folly, I am engaged in the service of *virtue*; you shall decide on this subject.

Write to me soon; give me your *advice*, *instruction*, *correction*; I will receive them with submission and obedience.—Assure yourself of

my eternal gratitude for your friendship and protection to, dear Sir, your pupil, friend, and servant,

EDWARD SAVILLE.

LETTER IV.

MR. JOHNSON TO MR. SAVILLE.

DEAR SIR,

YOUR letter gave me great pleasure, for it has shewn me that you have entered fully into my intentions, and that you accept me as your friend and monitor.

I shall directly enter upon my office, and my first act of it shall be to forward the letter you inclosed me for Mr. Munden.*

I am upon the whole well pleased with it, and take it as a proof of your sincerity, and a security for the steadiness of your principles, since you are neither ashamed nor afraid to avow them, when you are properly called upon. I do exceedingly desire to know all that has befallen you at Lady Belmour's; and how it is possible that in the regions of vice you can be employed in the service of virtue.

Your ingenuousness bids me hope every thing

* This letter does not appear; but its purport may be gathered from subsequent incidents.

that is right; but, if you should have deviated from the *strait* path of *virtue*, you need not fear to confess it to me, for you will find me an indulgent friend, and not an austere corrector.

My curiosity is excited to know whether Calypso is indeed the enchantress I have heard her described—how she governs the pupils of her academy, how she sustains her consequence with them while she lures them into her toils.—Write every thing that you think will be either interesting or entertaining to me, without reserve.—Be assured that you will meet with indulgence wherever it is necessary, with approbation where deserved, with advice where wanted; for I am, with truth and sincerity,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend and servant,

JARVIS JOHNSON.

LETTER V.

MR. MUNDEN TO LADY BELMOUR.

MADAM,

I PRESUME to acquaint your Ladyship with a circumstance or two relating to the saucy boy, I lately recommended to your notice and favour.

—I wrote to him a letter full of *fatherly advice* and *affection*; but the young puppy sets me at nought—tells me he is *wiser than I*, that *my* acquaintance are not *to his taste*, that he is determined to be his *own master*, and to choose his *own friends*. If he continues to treat me in this manner, I will give him *up for ever*, and choose some stranger to be my *heir*, instead of the son of my *friend*.

I beg to know your Ladyship's opinion of Saville, and to have your advice how to proceed with him.

He has sense enough—learning *more* than enough—*spirit* and *generosity*, but *all* in the wrong places.—Every canting, whining, *unfortunate wretch* has the power to draw his money from him; but he is *frugal* to a *fault* in every *gentleman-like* expence.—He has the *spirit* to bid defiance to his *best* friend, and the *mauvaise honte* in *good company*. He has no ambition, nor yet the softer passions, or at least he has never shewn any signs of them. Whenever I go about to penetrate into his character, he foils me in the attempt, and turns my own weapons upon me.

I depend upon your Ladyship's penetration to discover how he is to be managed, and to let me know it; and as you *speak of him*, so I

shall *act towards him*, for I know your Ladyship's discernment, and I rely upon your judgment.

I am,

Your Ladyship's most obedient servant,

RICHARD MUNDEN.

LETTER VI.

LADY BELMOUR TO MR. MUNDEN.

MR. MUNDEN may rest assured that Lady Belmour has always in view the *object* of his care and affection, and follows him with her attentions; she sees no reason to *despair* of making him *every thing* that his *friend wishes* him to *be*.

After all, *men* are very imperfect *preceptors*; it is not by reason and document that the *polish* of life is required. See what *aukward* or *huckram* figures, the youth step from the school and college into the world!—It is by conversing with *our sex* they become accomplished; we cultivate the *heart*, and polish the *manners*. Men who have had sense and spirit enough to shake off the fetters of *vulgar prejudices*, have acknowledged the advantages they have derived from *us*, and have endeavoured to extend them to others. There have been schools of this kind

both among the ancients and the moderns. Greece had her *Aspasia's*, *Leontium*, and *Thais.'* The accomplished Alcibiades was an example of the benefits of this society. Rome had her *Fulvia's* and *Aurelia's*. And France has had the *glory* to stand *alone* among the *moderns*, in the *reviving* and *improving* upon these polite *academies*. From the *days* of the enchanting *Ninon*, there has been a succession of *ladies* who have employed themselves in polishing the manners of the youth, and cultivating their hearts—We are at *this day* aiming at an imitation of their taste and elegance, but we do it badly; we have lost our own *preciseness* and *ceremony*, but we have not yet acquired the *naïveté* and *nonchalance* of our accomplished neighbours. However, as all improvements are made by degrees, there is great reason to hope that we may *in time* acquire them. The ferocity and bluntness of this country is giving way to the delicacy and refinement of the continent; our language is daily improving and polishing, our ladies have an air of ease and freedom, they throw off the *primness* and *reserve* of past times, and the *restraints* of *rigid systems*, which inspire *illiberal* sentiments and manners.—In this state of *improved society* I aspire to have *my name* descend to posterity, as one of those women of spirit, who lend their hands to forward the efforts of

others; to emancipate the youth of both sexes from the ignorance and *prejudices* of *Gothic times* and *manners*.

Your pupil wears a veil of shyness and reserve, through which it is difficult to penetrate:—no matter; we shall find out the way to make him throw it aside. The traveller, whom the wind and storm could not oblige to throw off his cloak, was induced by the warm sun to cast it away.—We will awaken his passions, the animating sun-shine of love shall warm his heart, he shall throw away the *cloak*, and we shall see what kind of a man there is under it.

Do not be impatient.—Leave the event to me,—I will be answerable for the success—I will tell you every thing that is material for you to know. I am obliged by your confidence and esteem, and will approve myself,

Sir,

Your sincere friend and humble servant,

AMELIA-SOPHIA-WILHELMINA BELMOUR.

LETTER VII.

MR. SAVILLE TO MR. JOHNSON.

MY DEAR MENTOR,

I WILL now discharge my promise, by giving you a faithful account of all that has passed

during my visit here: when you have the whole story before you, you will judge of the nature of my situation, the dangers and temptations that surround me, and of my ability and intention to escape them. As soon as the king's birth-day was past, I received a summons to attend Lady Belmour to her country seat. I was honoured with a place in her own coach, with Sir George Richmore and Miss Elford, with whom he has a temporary connexion.—We found several couples ready-paired in the ARK (if you will allow me the expression), and waiting our arrival, for none came but what brought his mate, or expected to find one here—Mr. Morris and Miss Barnham, Mr. Lewson and Miss Marshall, Sir John Lacy and Miss Wilson.—There was also a certain Mr. Armstrong, who seemed to pay his homage to our Lady Governess, and a Miss La Nouë, who, as I have reason to believe, was intended for my *partner*; several other pairs were expected.—Parties of pleasure of all kinds were proposed, when the remainder of the company should arrive.

They were in raptures of joy at our arrival; her Ladyship welcomed us with equal politeness and vivacity.

My dear friends, welcome to the land of wit, love, and liberty! enjoy yourselves in your own way; be *happy* here, and *I must be so.*

They chatted, laughed, danced, sung, and tried by every way to show their wit and their happiness; I was the only person that seemed insensible to the pleasures around me.

This mansion is large and convenient; it belonged to a West India merchant, who lived in the great style for about fifteen years; then sunk into ruin and obscurity, and died in the Fleet. His wife died soon after; his children were minors; his fortune is in the hands of his creditors; and his affairs cannot be settled till his eldest son comes of age, who is now but in his thirteenth year. The assignees let this house to Lady Belmour, and it suits her purpose exactly:—she can accommodate a great number of visitors: she keeps several carriages, a stable of good horses, and many servants; for she makes it a *condition*, that her guests shall bring none, but be attended by those of her own choosing;—but there is every accommodation that can be wished for ease, pleasure, and luxury.

Her ladyship is a fine and a graceful woman, about forty years, but does not choose to be thought so far advanced,—"*ancient Phillis has young graces*"—fat, but not unwieldy, just "*l'aimable embonpoint*;"—easy and polite in her deportment, with some wit, more satire, and every fashionable accomplishment.

She has an air of freedom and assurance bordering upon voluptuousness: when she is not pleased, it is tempered with haughtiness to those who have offended her: at other times she assumes the most insinuating air and manner, and when she tries to please she is *almost irresistible.*

There is an air of freedom and levity, and yet not absolute indecency in the conversations that pass here after dinner and supper. The morning, every person spends as he pleases; some ride out, some walk, some read;—the ladies make working parties, or sometimes musical ones; there is a music-room with instruments of all sorts, and books of the most fashionable compositions.

Here you breathe the air of affluence, luxury, and voluptuousness; there is every incitement offered to every one of the senses in turn; I resisted them, and was for some time merely a spectator of the scenes before me. Lady Belmour behaved with the utmost politeness to me, and seemed to leave me at liberty to amuse myself as I thought proper.

When she found that I took no particular notice of any person, but seemed to be reserved and abstracted, and to consider the company before me only as subjects for speculation, she began her attack upon me in the most artful manner. She asked me how I liked the coun-

try, her villa, her friends, the men, the women, and at last Miss La Nouë? I answered her briefly and coldly; and to the last question, *very well.*

She laughed scornfully;—Is that your way of commending a fine girl, Sir?—Yes, said I, I think her a fine young woman.—She put up her lip;—Perhaps you do not admire a Brunette? what style of beauty is most to your taste?—It is not complexion, said I, nor the colour of the *hair*, or the *eye*, that makes a woman *attracting*.—What is it then? said she, smiling. It is the *tout ensemble*, which is not easy to describe.—Very well, Sir, it is easier *to feel* than to *describe*; is it not?—I believe so, Madam.—Well, Sir, go on.—I am entirely of your Ladyship's opinion. No, not *entirely*, for you do not like Miss La Nouë.—I did not say so, Madam.—No, Sir, but your behaviour does. How can you see a fine girl, disengaged, looking at you with eyes that speak nothing like disapprobation or disdain, and yet pay no homage to her charms? She has wit and spirit as well as *form*; and you would find her capable of conversing, and entertaining you, if you would make an *effort* to speak to her.—I have no doubt of it, said I; the lady deserves all that your Ladyship says of her. But why should you wish me to be particular in my notice to her?—*I wish it!* Ridiculous idea! *You* are the *loser*. La Nouë does not want ad-

mirers.—I dare say not, Madam; but I have no pretensions. Go thy way, Cymon! thou hast a form, but no animation.

Some of the company came to us; and broke off the conference.

From this day Calypso and her nymphs exerted all the arts of their profession to allure me into the snares of Cupid; and finding them ineffectual to subdue the stubborn heart that resisted them, they set the *men* upon me, who exercised their wit at every weapon of raillery and ridicule, but all in vain. I wrapt myself up in impenetrable reserve, and baffled all their attempts upon me.

I declined most of the parties abroad; I can always amuse myself at home. Sometimes I retired into the library to read, at others into the music-room, and practised new lessons upon the harpsichord: but these sedentary amusements affected my health and spirits; I began to find exercise necessary; yet I would not go out in the parties, but rose early in the morning; and walked or rode before breakfast.

In one of my morning rambles I made an acquaintance with a gentleman farmer who was walking over his grounds; and upon further knowledge I find him deserving of my friendship. I will give you a hasty sketch of his history.

His name is Franklin, a man of genteel birth and education; he inherited an estate of about five hundred pounds a year; he married, for love, a woman without a shilling. They set out in a style much above their fortunes, and ran out of bounds, till they were involved in debts and difficulties. Just as they were on the brink of ruin, a relation of Mrs. Franklin, who took no notice of her while a poor unportioned girl, hearing she was well married, left her a fortune of five thousand pounds, which restored them to competence and happiness. Mr. Franklin paid off his debts, cleared his estate, took a farm into his own hands, studied agriculture and œconomy, and was successful in his practice of them: his wife turned her thoughts and attention to the domestic duties and virtues with equal success; in the course of ten years they are become rich, happy, and respectable.

Mr. Franklin encourages me to cultivate his friendship; he begins to lay his reserve aside, he rallies me on my situation; but he has given me a serious warning of Calypso and her nymphs; and I have convinced him of my honour and principles.

He seconds your admonitions, and offers me his advice or assistance whenever I shall find myself to stand in need of them. I often call upon him in my morning excursions, and we

seem to be more and more pleased with each other's company.

You will often hear of him in the course of my adventures here. I will now conclude this pacquet, and bid you adieu for this time; but you shall soon hear further from,

Dear Sir, yours faithfully,

EDWARD SAVILLE.

LETTER VIII.

MR. SAVILLE TO MR. JOHNSON.

SIR,

I SHALL now proceed in my narration without further preface or apology. From the time I became acquainted with Mr. Franklin, I used myself to call on him frequently; and his conversation was a resource from the chagrin I received in my disagreeable situation.

After I had been here some weeks, two ladies came hither in a post-chaise from I————, of whom I must give you a particular account. Mrs. Crosby is a woman of *fashion* in *every sense* of the *word*.—She is lately separated from her husband; for what woman of taste and spirit can bear the insupportable fatigues and restraints of conjugal duties and employments, to which her cruel husband would have confined her? But

she has found the way to burst the fetters, and recover her liberty.

Her companion, a Miss Jones, of whom I have much to tell you.—We were sitting at tea when these ladies arrived:—Lady Belmour received Mrs. Crosby with open arms, and congratulated herself and the company on such an acquisition to their society.

She looked very coldly on Miss Jones, and just nodded to her; but her *chaperon* obliged her to alter her behaviour.

Let me, said she, have the honour to reconcile Miss Jones to her friend and patroness; she is now sensible that Lady Belmour always deserved that title; and I know your Ladyship's *generosity* and *greatness* of *soul* too well, to think you harbour any resentment against poor Sukey for her *misapprehension;* receive her once again under your protection.

At *your request*, my *dear* friend, I will, said my Lady; and, if it is not her own fault, she shall find me still her best friend. She then embraced the young lady, who had tears in her eyes (as I imagined) from the consciousness of having offended her.

She courtsied low, but was silent;—we sat down, and returned to our tea.—There was in Miss Jones's deportment something different from the females I had yet seen in this house.

There was a decency in her manners, and an air of melancholy diffused over her countenance, which rendered her more interesting to me than any person in the society. I was disposed to scrutinize her person and character; but Lady Belmour's eye intercepted mine whenever it wandered towards her; and seemed to say,—you have no business to enquire after that girl.—I was the more inclined to observe both *her* and the *ladies* who called themselves her *friends*.—They seemed to treat the young woman with an air of superiority; they called her *Sukey*, without any addition; she seemed dispirited and humbled before them.

Lady Belmour and Mrs. Crosby were profuse in their professions of friendship to each other, and in compliments upon the *great* and *superior* qualities they both possessed.—The words, *greatness* of *soul*—*high sentiments*—*enlarged ideas*—*liberal minds*, &c. flew about, and were as readily *accepted* as if *deserved;* and perhaps *more* so, for true merit is *modest*, and fearful of taking too much to itself: however the conversation this evening was really more rational and agreeable than I had heard since I came hither, and I ventured to take a more than usual part in it.

The next morning I rose earlier than the rest of the company, went into the music-room, and sat down to the harpsichord, where I played

for two hours, without any idea of being overheard.

At length I spied a white hand and arm upon my left shoulder, and started. It was Lady Belmour herself who surprised me.—She has a remarkably fine hand and arm; it then looked so beautiful that I was tempted to pay homage to it.—I was stopped by a violent burst of laughter, that checked me, and made me recollect that the tempter was at my elbow.—Upon my word, Sir, I did not think you were so great a proficient in music!—I felt myself confused and uneasy at this tête a tête. But she relieved me by her easy and familiar chit-chat.—Sit still, Saville, said she, and oblige me with another lesson.—I did so. She complimented me.—What a pity, said she, that you hide your talents as assiduously as others display them! I wish you were more communicative to your friends, for their sakes, and your own. You are with people who know how to distinguish merit, Sir; but you are so reserved, that you will not suffer them to know your value.

Her air and manner were so insinuating, that I could not avoid answering her politeness. She praised, she flattered me; she tried to gain my esteem and confidence. She asked me how I liked Mrs. Crosby and Miss Jones. My notice of the latter did not pass unobserved. I an-

swered in general terms, but with *seeming* frankness. She seemed to wind about me in order to gain access to my *heart:* I was aware of her, and was upon my guard.

Our conversation was interrupted by Mrs. Crosby. I was desired to play again, was again applauded and solicited, till more company came in and summoned us to breakfast. I resumed my reserve, but kept an eye upon the *grand enchantress*, in order to find out what schemes she was forming for me; and yet at times my heart reproached me with ingratitude for her politeness and attention to me.

This day was chiefly spent in conversation, and we had parties of cards in the evening. Miss Jones was silent and melancholy.

The next morning I rose with an intention to ride to Franklin's before breakfast; but, going into the stable, the servant told me the horse was lame. I determined to take the air, so I sauntered about the fields for an hour, and then came round into the garden-grounds, and from thence went into a pavilion, at the end of the pleasure garden, where I *surprised* a *lady*, as she did *me*. It was Miss Jones; she was leaning her head upon her hand, and weeping bitterly. She was very much confused at my approach; she rose up, and offered to retire. I begged pardon for my intrusion, which I assured her was

accidental, and insisted on leaving her as I found her.—Sir, said she, I beg a favour of you?—Of me, Madam! What can I do for you? —It is, Sir, that you will have the goodness not to mention your seeing me here, and still less how you found me.—I will not, Madam, you may depend upon me. I am concerned, Madam, to see that you are not quite happy. I perceived it yesterday. I wish it was in my power to alleviate your sorrows;—Alas! said she, the *cause* of my distress cannot be *alleviated*.—Surely it *may*, said I; all human woes may be mitigated; I sincerely pity you, for I believe your distress *must* arise from *virtuous* motives.—She covered her face with both her hands.—Oh! Sir, said she, I believe you are too good for this house. If I dared to tell you—but what right have I to trouble you?

Dear Madam, if I can be of any service to you, do not scruple to trust me? I am a man of *honour*, and as such——Dear Sir, excuse me if I ask you one question—Are you any relation or friend of Lady Belmour's?—Neither, Madam. —Well, Sir, I think extremely well of you, for your generous pity to a stranger.—I am obliged to your good opinion, Madam; but what a man must he be who can see an amiable woman in tears, and not wish to relieve her distress?

Oh, Sir, you are too good to me. You

mentioned distress arising from virtuous motives. I would not for the world deceive or impose upon you. I dare not rank myself with the *good;* and yet I can truly say that my distress arises from virtuous *motives.* But, Sir, the hour of breakfast approaches. I must not be seen with you. I shall be suspected of—I know not what; and you will be ridiculed on my account; let us separate: perhaps another time an opportunity may offer for me to communicate the cause of my distress, and ask your advice upon it.—You do me honour, Madam; will you meet me here to-morrow morning at seven o'clock?—She paused,—I will, Sir; I think I perceive in you a man of honour and principle. I will meet you, Sir; but let us not go in together.—Good-morning, Madam, I leave you this instant.—I did so, and went round the outside of the garden, and came in at the great gate.

E. S.

IN CONTINUATION.

MY curiosity was raised by the morning's adventure, and my mind was employed the whole day in reflecting upon it, and in conjectures upon the subject of Miss Jones's distress, which I made no doubt proceeded from Lady Belmour's designs upon her.

Sometimes I fancied this *confidence* of Miss Jones was only a *scheme* to draw me into an engagement with her; a minute after, I smiled at the suggestions of my fancy, and reflected that we are as often outwitted by *ourselves* as by *others*, when we indulge suspicions of any kind. I wished impatiently for the hour when I was to meet Sukey; if she was artful, I was prepared to baffle hers, or her patroness's designs upon me.

I rose early in the morning. I hastened to the pavilion with a book in my hand, and sauntered about for near an hour before she came thither. At length I saw her coming towards me with a downcast eye and timid aspect. When she began to speak, it was in a low and tremulous voice.

Sir, said she, I am afraid you will think me very free, upon so short an acquaintance, to trouble you with my story.

Madam, you honour me by your confidence; I shall be happy to do you any *service* that is consistent with my *principles*, which are not exactly conformable to those of the *lady* of this *house*.—That is what puzzles me, said she: you seem to know Lady Belmour's *character*, and yet I find you with her society.—I came not hither by inclination, Madam, but at the desire of a gentleman who calls himself my friend. I shall

not stay here long; but, whilst I do, I am a *spectator*, and not an *actor* in the *Drama* that is represented here. Tell me, without scruple, how I can serve you; I am already inclined to be your friend, and I believe your story will confirm me so.

Indeed, Sir, said she, I want a friend. I will at all events tell you the particulars of my unhappy situation, and then you will judge whether I am most to be blamed or pitied.

My father and mother were upper servants in two noble families; my father by their interest obtained a place in the customs.

Their income was sufficient with prudence to support their family in a decent and respectable manner; but the habit of imitating the manners of their superiors, in the way of life they had seen, made them go to the extent of their fortune, and sometimes exceed it. They also retained a kind of *servility* in their behaviour, which led them to do services of *every kind* to those who had it in their power to make them *certain returns*. My poor father became at length sensible of the folly and danger of such a conduct; he is now pining under heartfelt grief and remorse for what is past; but my mother continues to act upon the same principles, though her daughter's ruin is one of the consequences of it. She boasts of the friends she has

made, and the conveniences she derives from it. This way of thinking and acting is among the obligations she owes to Lady Belmour. I was the first-born of this marriage. Lady Belmour was my godmother: if she had promised and vowed, that I should *worship* the pomps and vanities of the world, and sacrifice every thing to them, she had been a faithful sponsor; for every precept of hers was directly opposite to those of the Catechism.

She inspired me with the love of dress and pleasure; she laughed me out of that natural reserve which is given by Heaven to be the guard of female virtue. She taught me to despise *unfashionable* doctrines and persons; she carried me to public places, and shewed me young women, who lived in all the gaieties of life, without any apparent means to support them. She told me that handsome girls might always make their fortunes, if it were not their own faults. Thus educated, thus prepared for ruin, she threw me in the way of young men of high rank and fortune, who were unprincipled in all that regarded our sex.

I was gratified by the homage they paid me; I took to myself all the merit their flattery bestowed upon me; I was intoxicated with vanity, or I never could have believed that Lord C———— would make me his wife, espe-

cially after I had been his mistress. He persuaded me to put myself under his protection; and Lady Belmour seconding his designs, I fell a victim to them.

Here she covered her face, and wept.—Dear Madam, proceed! said I. I pity you with my heart and soul; indeed you are more to be *pitied* than *blamed*.—She resumed her narrative.—A transient dream of pleasure succeeded; but I soon awoke to real misery. My weak heart, and perverted judgment, believed in promises of *eternal* constancy and *neverfailing* love. Alas! how common the deception! and how common the too late conviction! In two months the ardour of his passion abated; in another he grew tired of me, and sought a new object of his depraved appetite.

During his occasional absences, the mistress of the house where I lodged lent me some books to read, for I complained of being too much alone: among these were some that opened my *mental* eye, and shewed me the misery of my situation: I was struck with horror and remorse, and unavailing penitence.

I got acquainted with this good woman, and opened my heart to her: she saw and pitied my distress; she lent me other books that spoke of pardon and peace to the returning sinner;

these I eagerly studied, and made them my constant companions.

When Lord C——— returned, I received him with coldness and disgust. He desired an explanation of this behaviour, and I gave him such an one as he did not expect. He laughed at my scruples and at my penitence.—Sukey, says he, I intended to come to an explanation with you, but you have prevented me: take courage, my girl! these fancies will soon wear off. I will send Lady Belmour to comfort you, and to do the office of a friend between us. I am glad to find that you are as willing to part as I am. Adieu, my charmer!—So saying, he went from me, and in an hour after Lady Belmour came. She enumerated the advantages arising from such connections as these; said, that men were fickle creatures, but their fortunes were convenient to us; that we should bear with their faults, and make advantage by their weaknesses, for in them lay our strength and wisdom.

She then acquainted me that Lord C——— had deposited a bond of five hundred pounds in her hands for my use, which would effectually comfort me for his loss. A few more such *affairs* as this, my dear, said she, will make your fortune, and set you above the world.

I made no reply to her arguments, but only begged her to give me the bond.—No, my child, not yet, said she; you are too young and ignorant to act for yourself. I will keep it for you; and when I see a proper time, I will either surrender it, or employ it for your service.

I demanded the bond, and said I had earned it too dearly. She laughed.—You shall go with me into the country in the summer, and then we shall talk further on this subject, said she.—She left me in the sullens, as she called it; and said, when I was in a better humour she would see me again. She called again two days after; she made me a new *proposal*, as she called it, and a settlement, from another party I had not yet seen. I refused it with disdain. I asked for my bond, and was again refused. I was angry; we quarrelled; she called me sauce-box, and left me in wrath, saying, she would see me no more till I knew better the value of her friendship. I resolved to leave my lodging, to sell all my clothes and trinkets, and with the money put myself into business; but my appearance gave suspicions of my character. I desired the mistress of my lodgings to recommend me to any lady of character that wanted a companion; she spoke to a widow lady, who took me upon her word, and I joyfully went to her house. I had not been there many weeks,

before Lady Belmour found means to inform my protectress of my late connexion with Lord C————; in consequence of which she dismissed me immediately, without examining into the particulars of my story and situation.

I kept up my spirits till this event, and then they forsook me. I went home to my father's house almost in despair. My father was moved with my distress; but my mother reproached me with ingratitude to Lady Belmour, and told me I must ask her pardon, before she would receive me to her favour.

Mrs. Crosby soon after visited my mother, and joined with her to persuade me to visit Lady Belmour with her, and that she would use her influence with her to forgive me, and to restore my *bond*. This argument prevailed with me to come hither, for I knew there was no other method to recover it; and if I could prevail on Lady Belmour to give it me, I have now an offer of entering into business, in partnership with a woman of character.

Since I came hither, Lady Belmour has hinted to me, that my *reconciliation* with *her* depends upon an implicit obedience to all her commands; and that she has expectations upon me, which will soon be further explained, and that will put it in my power to make my own terms with her.

I dread this explanation; I know too well her character and employment. I am fearful of being exposed to new attacks; of dangers, and perhaps insults, in this place; in which case I have no friend to protect me from Lady Belmour's power. I am resolved not to enter into any new *connexion;* if I should find myself in this dangerous situation, I will fly from it; if I could depend upon any friend to favour my escape, I should be less apprehensive and more easy. I would not for the world engage you, Sir, in any contest or difficulty. I have told you nothing but simple truth; I seek not to conceal or extenuate my faults or follies; I thank God, I have seen them early, and am determined to avoid them in future, and to lead a life of sobriety and virtue; but I am disappointed of the *means* to put my resolutions in practice, and remain at present in a very disagreeable and precarious situation. I am afraid of *others*, and I am afraid of *myself;* lest either interest or pleasure should tempt me to return into the path I have but just escaped, and habit confirm me the slave of vice during my life.

Here Miss Jones ended her narrative, and with the greatest diffidence waited my sentence upon it. I comforted and re-assured her; pitied her misfortunes, and commended her virtuous resolutions.

I promised to be her friend and protector, in case she should want my assistance. We separated after having agreed to behave with the same distance and reserve as hitherto in company, and to communicate to each other every thing that we could discover in regard to Lady Belmour's designs upon either of us.

Some days after these incidents, there arrived two gentlemen in an elegant post-chaise, with flaming liveries. On the first view of it the ladies exclaimed, It is dear Mr. Livermore! I ran out to see this welcome visitor; when I saw step out of the carriage a figure that excited such an inclination to laugh as I could hardly suppress. He was dressed in the gayest and most effeminate style, with a person that set all his ornaments at defiance.

A broad red face, embroidered with large pimples with white heads; a wide mouth full of yellow straggling teeth, with an affected smile upon it; a clumsy person overdressed, with an air and manner that beggars all description. He walked as if he was dancing; he lisped when he spoke: if any man had strove to render affectation *detestable*, he would have imitated him.

This Adonis was accompanied by a Mr. Allen, his parasite: by their reception, you would have supposed they were the most beautiful and amiable among the children of men.

From the time this *cher mignon* arrived here, I observed Miss Jones's countenance wore a veil of deep concern. Lady Belmour watched every turn of her eye, and every look that passed between her and me. I snatched a moment's opportunity, to say to her,—Meet me in the pavilion to-morrow morning at six o'clock!

The next morning I went, to my appointment, by five o'clock, and sauntered about for an hour, which I thought as long as three. At length the lady appeared.—Alas! Sir, said she, I am involved in a new perplexity. This coxcomb Livermore.—This *Adonis*, said I.—Well, Sir, this accomplished favourite of Lady Belmour and Mrs. Crosby, encouraged by them, has had the assurance to offer me a settlement, which I have answered with proper indignation and contempt. Lady Belmour laughed, sneeringly,—Pretty airs, Sukey! and to me that know you!—Yes, Madam, so you do, to my cost, I am sure.—Saucy slut! And so you think to pass yourself upon that *novice Saville*, for a piece of virtuous composition! I see your aim, and I shall cross it.

Indeed, Madam, you are mistaken; I have no design upon Mr. Saville; nor he upon me.—That I shall know more certainly hereafter; but, in the mean time, pray, Ma'am, how do you intend to dispose of yourself?—If, said I, your Ladyship would restore me the *bond* in

your possession, I would employ it in trade, and lead a life more suitable to my inclination.—I believe you *lie*, child! said she, haughtily.—No, indeed, Madam; I am *serious* in this intention.—Then you are a *fool*, said she, and cannot discern your own interest: but, to convince you that I do not mean to *rob* you of your *property*, I will tell you *my* intentions; I am still more your friend than you deserve; I am endeavouring to procure you an establishment for life. Mr. Livermore has made you a noble offer; he will share his fortune with you, while you can retain his heart, and settle two hundred a year upon you *for life*. You refuse his proposal because you do not like his person; foolish prejudice! or else because you have *other views*, which I perceive plainly enough, for I am not to be imposed on by your Magdalen airs.

As soon as you are engaged in a new connexion, I will put the bond into your hands, but not before; for I will not put it in your power to reproach me for what is past, nor yet to expose me and my society of *friends* to the animadversion of the *ignorant*, the *malicious*, nor the *hypocritical* part of the world, by making you *independent* of me.

Soon after, Mr. Livermore came, and with all his affectation and grimace declared a passion for me, and renewed his proposal. To have

mentioned a virtuous motive of refusal, would have been to speak an unknown language to him, and have brought upon me the ridicule and contempt of the whole Society: I therefore told him, as plainly as I dared, that his persou was not agreeable to me.—Ah, Madam, said he, am I then so unfortunate as not to please you? There are those that—Excuse my sincerity, Sir, said I, but I would rather *give myself* to a ploughman, than *sell myself* to a prince.—He shrugged, sighed, bowed—*Ah crudele, ingrato, tyranno! adio, mio Caro!*—He danced out of the room backwards; and, though my mind was strongly agitated, I could hardly restrain my laughter till he was out of sight; but I have been serious enough ever since.

You are very ingenuous, said I. I am this moment thinking how I can be of service to you. Lady Belmour thinks there is an understanding between you and me; let us encourage this notion, it will prevent her forming other connexions for either of us. I shall enjoy great pleasure in deceiving her penetration, and at the same time assisting you. I shall own myself your *protector;* under this character I will demand your bond of her; when you have it in your possession, you may employ it as you think best. We will leave this house together; you shall pursue your own schemes, and you

may depend upon my friendship, and further assistance, if necessary; for it is incumbent on me to convince you, it was not *merely curiosity* that made me take a part in what concerns you.

She looked down, bowed, blushed, and hesitated; at last she spake,—Oh, Sir! you are too good and too generous, to deceive or impose on any person; I am infinitely obliged for your good opinion, and for the friendship you offer me: but, alas, Sir! neither you nor I can impose on Lady Belmour: she is as cunning as Lucifer; sometimes I think she can read what passes in the hearts of people. She will discover your artifice, and will either contrive to separate us, or else she will endeavour to bring our *supposed* connexion to *reality*. I warn you of it *now*, Sir, lest you should hereafter think me in any degree accessary to her designs.—My good girl, said I, I am pleased with your generous frankness; it confirms my intention; only take *your* part in it, and I will take all the blame that happens to myself; give me your hand upon it.—She did so.—Let us begin our plan directly; we will walk together in sight of the house.—Oh, Sir, said she, you are not aware of the dangers of this scheme; if we are seen together, Lady Belmour will have her plots against us.—Let her see us, said I; let them all see us, and make their remarks, it will forward my design.—But, Sir, if

Mr. Livermore should resent?—I should be *diverted*, and would make him an object of entertainment to all the society; but I know he dares not.

She came reluctantly into my scheme. I took her hand, and led her in sight of the house; we were soon observed, and shewn to the rest. They called us to breakfast; I led her to the company. We had looks, nods, and winks, thrown at us from all quarters. Lady Belmour seemed in *doubt* whether to *encourage* or *separate* us. She rallied me; I returned it. She called me Cymon, and asked me if that was my *Iphigene* or my *Sylvia*?—No matter, said I, so long as it is not my *Urganda*.—She put up her lip. Mrs. Crosby took my part; she made Lady Belmour laugh off her anger. These sober fellows, said she, when their hearts are touched the first time, are dragons in love and assurance.

Finding me steady and undaunted, she wished me joy on the discovery that I had a *heart*. I thanked her; and said, I hoped she would let *me* have the *credit* of the discovery. The rest congratulated me and Sukey; she looked confused and uneasy.

Mr. Livermore looked disdainfully at us, and turned all his attentions to Miss La Noüe, who received them graciously. After the first opening, they let us enjoy our conversations quietly.

After this project of mine had taken place, I took a part in several parties of pleasure, and made Sukey my companion in them. One day that we had been on an excursion, Lady Belmour met us at our return with a note in her hand, which she was reading.—My sprightly lads and lovely girls, listen to me! You are all invited to a rural ball on Thursday next.—We all gathered round her, and begged to know to whom we were obliged for this invitation.

A gentleman farmer in the next parish, said our lady, Mr. A. Collins by name, is lately come to the possession of an estate of about two hundred a year, by the death of an old batchelor, his very distant relation. This young man has notions in his head, that he ought not to live in *obscurity*, but be *known* and make a *figure* among his new neighbours; to this *end* he is going to call them together, to celebrate his birth-day: he has done us the *honour* to invite us among the rest, and sends this note, which I shall read to you.

" Mr. Andrew Collins presents his most humble
" respects and compliments to my Lady Bel-
" mour, and all the gentlemen and ladies be-
" longing unto her good family, and begs they
" will do him the great honour and favour to
" give him their company to a farmer's dinner,

" supper, and dance, at Oak-Hall, on Thursday,
" August 20."

Now what say you, my children? Shall we go and give the farmer a lesson of good breeding? Shall we show him how to act his part on the stage of life, and initiate him into the mysteries of the goddess of fashion? what say you?—What your ladyship pleases, was the general answer.—Well then, I say, let us go. I foresee much amusement, we shall meet there some of the *saucy small gentry*, who have had the impertinence to decline our society; we will mortify them by our politeness and hilarity, and we shall see some fine subjects to exercise our wit and humour upon. Girls, what say you to a gentleman farmer? is there any of you that will set your cap at him?—Yes, I will, said Nancy Elford.

I do not give my consent to that, said Sir George Richmore, her paramour; I cannot spare Nancy this summer, whatever I may do the next.

Be quiet, Sir Georgy, said my lady, you shall not spoil the girl's marriage; thou shalt have him, Nancy, if thou wilt, and I will manage it for thee. I know a *person* that would suit the *Farmer better* (looking at my friend Sukey); but she has thought proper to *cater* for herself, so I shall leave her to her *fate*; but enough of this

kind. Well, my boys and girls, hold yourselves in readiness against Thursday.

As we walked into the drawing-room, I said to Sukey Jones, So the poor farmer is already disposed of?—Aye, said she, and it might have been *my fortune*, you find, if I had been more obedient.—Well, said I, let them go on at their peril!

All the evening after, we practised cotillions, and other dances, in order to surprize the country folk at farmer Collins's assembly.

The morning after I rose early, and rode to Mr. Franklin's. He kindly reproached me with my long absence, and pressed me to stay and breakfast with him; at his request I sat down with him and his family. His wife is amiable and obliging; his children have the rose of health upon their cheeks, and the smile of innocence and peace beautifies their features. I enjoyed the dear domestic circle, and partook of their happiness.

As we were sitting at the table, a gentleman came in whom I had never seen before. He came forward in a genteel and familiar way, saying,—Sit still, my good friends; no ceremony with me, I insist. Mr. Franklin, I rejoice to see you well, and happy with your amiable family. Franklin rose, and took his hand; Welcome, thrice welcome home, dear Mr. Selby! I hope

you are now come to fix among us!—I am, Sir: I have brought my happiness home with me, and shall have nothing to carry me from you again.—You are then married to Miss Bennet?—No, I am not yet so happy. Our dear mother wished us to be married at our own village, and I could not refuse her any thing, but I hope it will not be delayed much longer.—Is Mrs. Bennet to live with you at the parsonage?—No, my friend, she and Miss Melcombe will reside at the house I purchased lately, and be our best neighbours; and your family I reckon as the next to them in our estimation.—I see a card upon your table; have you not had an invitation to Collins's ball next Thursday?—Yes; and so have you, I suppose?—You are right; and the ladies, are not they too invited?—Yes, certainly; but they will not go, nor I neither.—And why, Sir?—Because Lady Belmour and her *gang* are to be there; the foolish fellow thought he gave himself consequence by inviting them. I shall not carry our dear little girls into such company.—Take care of what you say, Sir, for this gentleman is one of Lady Belmour's family.—No, surely!—Yes, certainly. But do not be frightened: he is my friend. This is the gentleman whom I mentioned to Mr. Butler, your curate; and whom he mentioned to Mr. Jarvis.

Say no more, Butler has told me all. Franklin,

you must introduce me.—I rose, and bowed. Franklin took a hand of each of us, and joined them.—Sir, said I, I shall be happy to be of your acquaintance, if Mr. Franklin will answer for me.—Yes, said he, I will be your god-father to this gentleman, our rector; and the worthy successor to our late excellent pastor, Mr. Bennet.—In the course of a very agreeable conversation it appeared, that Mr. Butler was the person who gave Mr. Johnson intelligence of the situation of *one Mr. Saville*, who resided at the Island of Calypso. This circumstance set aside further ceremony, and in an hour's time we became friends, and familiar ones too.

I left this company with extreme reluctance, and they were as unwilling to part with me. I tore myself away, and came home but just in time for dinner.

Lady Belmour interrogated me like a school-boy, and I made her saucy answers. My friend Sukey desired me to testify, that *she* knew nothing of my absence or return. I told her, I did not hold myself accountable to *any body* for my motions.—Lady Belmour drew up, and looked stately.

In the evening another coxcomb arrived here, Lord S——, who paid his homage to Mrs. Crosby. After this ball is over, you shall hear from me again; for this time I bid you adieu.

Yours, faithfully,

 E. SAVILLE.

LETTER IX.

MR. JOHNSON TO MR. SAVILLE.

I THANK you, my dear Sir, for your communications; the sincerity with which you paint every emotion of your own heart, as well as others, is truly amiable. The former part of your conduct is unexceptionable; but excuse me if I doubt the prudence of the latter. The scheme which you have so hastily formed, and begun to execute, is attended with much danger to yourself, and may probably lead you into the labyrinth which you have hitherto avoided; and give occasion to those who have set snares in your way to triumph in their success.

Miss Jones is, by your account, an amiable young woman; her modesty and ingenuousness have more charms for your untainted heart, than all the factitious graces of her competitors. This game of playing at making love generally ends in good earnest; I am doubtful whether this precaution will come in time to be of service to you.

Be not, however, frightened at my remonstrance; tell me the worst that has happened, and I will advise you how to make the best of it, for you may yet recover, and be the stronger for your fall.

I could say much on the subject, but I will wait your reply. If you are not fast bound in those *soft fetters* which seem light till you want to cast *them off*, leave Calypso's Island, and hasten to your sincere and affectionate friend,

JOHNSON.

LETTER X.

MR. SAVILLE TO MR. JOHNSON.

On Wednesday, two new members of our society made their first appearance here, a Mrs. Watkins and a Miss Freewill. The former, a little deformed figure, with all the affected airs and graces that render beauty itself disgusting: she was patched and painted, trimmed, flounced, and furbelowed, till, as Farquhar expresses it, you could not see her head for her tail. The latter, a pert, lively hoiden, just broke loose from a boarding-school, with so many natural charms, and so many acquired graces, that it was not easy to distinguish between them. There was, however, an attraction about her, and I felt a degree of the magnetism, till reason called me to account, and told me they were only sensual attractions, and that she had none for a cultivated mind.

Before the arrival of this young enchantress, I was actually debating with myself whether Susan Jones would not be an agreeable compa-

nion for me. I perceived in her a kind of prudery, more pleasing to me, than an open attack upon my heart; she looked as if she wished to please me, and yet feared to please too much. In the moments of cool and sober reflexion, I disdained the vile suggestions, and one glimpse of a retrospect with you, my dear Monitor, put them all to flight.

My first interview with this lively girl turned the scale on her side; my heart seemed to want only an *object* to fix its affections. Miss Freewill distinguished me early; she enquired who and what I was. Lady Belmour introduced us to each other in form: she seemed to wish we might like each other; she spoke well of each to the other; and told me that Miss Freewill had a very handsome fortune.

I understood that this young hoiden had eloped from the lady under whose care her guardian had placed her, and had taken her first step into life under the auspices of Mr. Watkins, who had brought her to Lady Belmour's, in order to introduce her into the best company.

This fair lady pointed the artillery of her eyes directly at my heart. I perceived her attack, and was upon the defensive. Lady Belmour whispered me—Oh Saville! what an insensible wretch thou art! here were a girl worthy of the homage of thy heart, which thou hast surrender-

ed to that unanimated prude, Sukey Jones.—I was disconcerted; but, recovering, I said, My heart refuses the election of another, it will choose its own mistress, and be its own monitor.—Saucebox! said she, be more civilized, or I shall give thee up to thy fate.—Notwithstanding the airs I assumed, I was not easy with myself. I found myself exactly in the situation of the young Telemachus, in the Island of Cyprus.

Telemachus thought on his Mentor, as one departed to the Elysian fields, and this encouraged his weakness, as being freed from the restraint of his admonitions: but I thought on my living Mentor, and it strengthened my resolution, which before was in a tottering state.

These reflexions awakened my mind, and put me upon my guard both against myself and those around me.

The young enchantress seemed to take pleasure in teazing me; the rest of the company took the hint, and encouraged her to persevere in doing so.—She asked Lady Belmour, Can Mr. Saville sing? can he play? can he talk?—They enjoyed my embarrassment. After dinner we all went into the saloon, music was called for—Can Mr. Saville dance?—No, said Lady Belmour, he can do nothing that he is desired or wished to do; do not give yourself any trouble about such an insensible creature, my dear Miss

Freewill.—Mrs. Crosby rallied me upon my want of courage to answer so fair a challenger. I started up, bowed, and presented my hand to the lady. I had the good fortune to acquit myself to hers and the company's satisfaction. The Syren danced charmingly. Several minuets were danced. I performed a second with my friend Miss Jones, who seemed pleased with my attentions. Miss Freewill tossed up her head with an air of contempt, for Sukey's minuet would not do after hers: but I remembered my situation, and thought it safer to continue my notice to her.

Lady Belmour commended my dancing.—I hope, said I, I have convinced your ladyship, and the company, that I do not always refuse their commands.—You are a strange creature, said she, you can please if you will, but you are an humourist, and are not to be advised. I suppose if I should call upon you to-morrow evening to dance a minuet, you will refuse me?—No, Madam, I will not, if you give me that lady for my partner.—Well, said she, that is something like: I shall try you.—In the evening I was called out to a person who wanted to speak with me. It was Mr. Franklin's servant, who brought a letter from his master, which he was ordered to deliver to none but my own hands. The contents as follow:

DEAR SIR,

WE are informed that Lady Belmour intends Mr. Collins the favour of recommending a partner *for life*, as well as for to-morrow evening, of which you dropt a hint also at our last meeting. It is resolved, on our part, to warn him of his danger, and to assist him to escape it.

The principal reason of my giving you this trouble is, to inform you that there will be some grotesque figures at Farmer Collins's ball to-morrow, who are not entirely unknown to you; but you are desired not to know, nor to guess at them, nor their business there, nor to give the least hint.

Perhaps there may be of this party some country girls, who might compare with any of Calypso's nymphs; we will allow of your curiosity in respect to them, for you cannot discover more than you know.

If you behave to our satisfaction, you may stand a chance to know and be known to them hereafter. So wishing you an agreeable partner for the evening,

I remain your faithful friend,
and obedient servant,
JOHN FRANKLIN.

Wednesday Afternoon.

I put my letter carefully into a private pocket, and returned to the company: they were inqui-

sitive; but I evaded their questions. Miss Freewill *flirted* with me evidently, and her forwardness was the only shield against her attractions. To avoid the danger of her eyes, I directed my attentions to Miss Jones, who was treated rather cavalierly on my account; I danced with her till supper-time, after which we broke into parties.

We separated early; and went to our respective apartments; reserving ourselves for the morrow.

I THANK you, my dear paternal friend, for your wise and seasonable admonition, it came in time for me; and yet it might have come too late, if something unforeseen had not interposed between me and the dangers you foresaw.

I have a long story to tell you, but must relate all the circumstances in the order in which they happened. I will begin with the rustic ball, of which I promised an account.

When we arrived at Collins's we were shewn into a large old-fashioned wainscotted hall, well lighted, by a contrivance of fixing bits of clay all round the room, and putting candles into them. There was a great number of oaken planks laid across chairs at convenient distances, so as to make seats for all the company. The accommodations, though rustic, were conve-

nient. Round every candle socket (as I may call it) was a wreath of green, intermixed with flowers, which had a good effect. Our arrival seemed to put the house in a bustle; our host came and paid his compliments, and acknowledged the honour that was done him, in a manner courteous, though awkward. He was dressed in a handsome suit of second mourning, and his hair very tolerably dressed, for which purpose a hair-dresser was fetched from the town of I——; silk stockings, and every article of his dress in a style above his situation, and indeed he looked as if he thought it added much to his consequence. After the first compliments, Lady Belmour, with the most polite and insinuating air and manner, took Collins's hand (which was none of the softest), and with the smile of a goddess said, My dear Sir, will you give me leave to recommend a partner to you for this evening?—Collins bowed—blushed—hesitated, —I saw in a moment that the *hint* had been given.—Ma—Ma—Madam—said he——I—I—I—have consulted a friend who understands these matters better than I do; and he has told me, that it is customary upon these occasions, to change partners every dance; and I intend, if your Ladyship has no objection, to follow his direction?—By all means, answered our Ladyship.—The rest of the company encored, By all

means.—But Sir, said she, will you not introduce us to the rest of your company?—Madam, said he, I will bring them to you; for our parlour is too small now the company is encreased.—He went out, and in three minutes returned, followed by a numerous company, composed of all the principal farmers, with their wives and daughters; spruce tradesmen; and small gentry in the neighbourhood. We saluted them in the politest manner, and desired them to be seated.

Collins, by the assistances of his *friend* (whom I shall introduce to you by and by), acquitted himself very properly as master of the house, and the ceremonies also; the music was called for, a very decent band; they played a piece or two by way of prelude, and we were preparing to dance, when a knocking was heard at the outward door; it opened, and two couple of strangers made their appearance; the women were masked, the men painted and disguised; one seemed a *sailor*, the other a *farmer* of the lowest order. The latter came forward, and made an awkward bow before he spoke.—Hearing, said he, that Master Collins had a feast on this day, we made bold to come hither to see the entertainment, and to congratulate him on the increase of his fortune. My name is John Bull; my comrade's, Sam Bowling; these girls are our

sweethearts; that is enough to say about us. For the rest, we must trust to Master Collins's hospitality for our welcome. Collins welcomed them with an air of ease and freedom, that shewed he had been advertised of their visit. They took their places among the farmer's families. The seeming farmer made a sign to Collins, and he ordered the music to play a minuet.

Collins stept up to Lady Belmour: he begged that she would do him the honour to open his ball, and to take out a gentleman whom she thought proper for her partner. My Lady looked astonished at the politeness and propriety of this address (which I plainly understood as a part of the lesson he had been taught); she answered, Then, Mr. Collins, I shall take no other than *yourself*. He bowed to the ground, took her hand, and led her down with a very good grace, and looked less abashed than could have been expected. But wot you well, the youth had been in training a *month* before, under an itinerant dancing-master, and was prepared to exhibit his person in a *minuet*, to the great astonishment of all his friends and neighbours, who stared incessantly, and could hardly believe their own eyes.

Collins walked his minuet, for it could not be called dancing, but seemed in continual fear of blundering: my lady looked like the goddess of

ease and plenty, and moved very gracefully. Any body, unacquainted with her character, must have been prejudiced in her favour. She behaved with such politeness to Collins, as helped him through the part he was acting; and which he performed better than could be expected; he handed my lady back to her seat with great applause; the poor fellow puffed and blowed, and wiped his face; he had worked himself into a violent perspiration, and it was some minutes before he recovered his voice or his courage. When he was able, he asked my Lady to tell him who should be taken out, and he should take it as the greatest favour she could do him. She was pleased with the office, and called out Lord S—— and Mrs. Crosby; they danced a very good minuet; Sir George Richmore and Miss La Nouë; Mr. Morris, and Miss Elford. Mr. Livermore and Mrs. Watkins! never did I see a couple more completely ridiculous; a *smile* or a *simper* sat upon the faces of the whole company. Mr. John Bull laughed without fear or ceremony; I edged towards him, to take a nearer notice of him.—*Neighbours*, said he, those figures *there* are a *fine gentleman* and a *fine lady!* they are of use to those who can observe what they see, for they make fashion and affectation as odious and contemptible as they ought to be. Look at them,

and then you will learn to despise them, and such as imitate them!—I approached him; Have a little mercy, farmer, said I!—No, said he, I will have none, I am here, like the Clown in the old comedy, to point out folly and to chastise it. Look to yourself, young gentleman; if you deserve my lash, you shall feel it.—Indeed! said I. I will then look about me, and know my company.—Be quiet, Saville, said he, observe your directions, and get away to your own company.—I was about to reply, when I heard myself called out.—Lady Belmour said, I now expect the performance of your promise.—With pleasure, said I; and immediately took out Miss Freewill, whose face glowed with apparent satisfaction. She danced capitally; I did my best, and we were warmly applauded.—This minuet, said Lady B—, makes amends for the last, in a whisper to me.—I bowed, and went back to my friend John Bull.—Will you do me the favour to correct me, said I!—Go your way, and do not be vain, said he.—I was again called away to join in a cotilion, which was not too well performed; after which I went in search for the farmer; but, instead of him, I met with the sailor. —He took my hand; What cheer, brother?—I do not know yet, said I, till I am better acquainted with my company.—What, said he, are you so pleased with the farmer, that you have

nothing to say to his companion?—Not till he has introduced me to him, said I.—Avast there! I am his kinsman.—What of that?—You need not be ashamed to shake hands with a *sailor;* mind that, brother: perhaps I could show you a tight little brig under my care, as well worth your attack, as any of those fine-rigged frigates there, with *all* their colours flying.—Perhaps so, said I; but, if I remember my instructions, I am forbidden to enquire too much.—You are very obedient, said he; perhaps it was only designed to whet your curiosity. It is true, they are not to be gazed on by profane or vulgar eyes, but that should excite you the more.—You deal in paradoxes, said I. Show me to the rest of the company!—Not yet, said he; but when the fine folks are set into dancing, I will make a *signal,* and you may follow me out if you think it worth your while.—I shall expect it impatiently, said I.—While we were speaking, the forms were removing, and they were preparing for country dances. I saw Lady Belmour in conference with the farmer, who seemed not to spare her any more than the rest of the company. I got near enough to hear them, and observed that she had the address to elude all his arrows of wit and satire, and returned them with superior courtesy and politeness. I heard him say—The deuce is in the woman! Will you neither fight nor fly?

—Neither, said she, but I will stand my ground. I am sure that you are something above your appearance, and I will take my revenge on you for your impertinence, by commanding you to dance a minuet with me.—I dance! I play the monkey! Not I, truly.—Harkee, friend, said she; *you* must either *fight* or *fly*, in spite of your *wit* and *satire*. As a *gentleman*, I can take your reproofs, and respect your intention; but as a *clown*, I cannot submit to them, but will desire some *gentleman* here to turn you out of the room: so now you know the alternative.—There is *none*, said he; I find myself obliged to accept your *challenge*; I respect your wit and politeness, and would be amongst the foremost to pay homage to it, if your *heart* were as good as your exteriors.—She bit her lip, and bade him call to the musicians to play a minuet. I was all astonishment, and they soon had a large circle round them. The farmer danced in character, and made some extraordinary gesticulations; but at the conclusion he assumed the gentleman, and making a bow, thanked her ladyship for the honour she had done him, and at that instant I recognized my friend John Franklin in him.

He came to me soon after.—I have made your governness feel my lash; and I should have said more to her, but her politeness checked me, and

her wit over-matched me.—You are the first character here to-night, farmer, said I; but I am afraid you will become too remarkable, and be obnoxious to the displeasure, and perhaps the revenge, of some people here.—I fear nothing, said he, my motive is my support; I came hither to keep my country neighbours from being dazzled by the false glare of fashion and folly. I have shewn them the reverse of the picture, and they look upon your lady Belmour with the contempt she deserves.—And do you think you are not known?—I care not much, said he; but she and her crew don't know me; nor you of course.—There you are mistaken, said I. You are my friend Franklin.—Hush, said he; go to your company, or I will be even with you.—I give you leave, said I.—What fine girl is that you took out for your minuet? Is that your Miss Jones?—No, said I; it is Miss Freewill; how do you like her?—She dances too well to please me, said he.—How is that explained?—I would not for the world that a *mistress*, a *sister*, or a daughter of mine, danced so well.—And why so?—Because she must have lost the *first* blush of virgin modesty, before she could exhibit her person to the utmost advantage.—A truce with moralizing, said I, I long to know your friend the sailor, and to see the girls you have in charge.—You shall see them in due time, Saville;

but go now and take a partner, the dance is begun.

I saw Miss Jones without a partner; I went directly to her, and we danced through it: after it was finished, I saw the sailor waving his handkerchief upon his stick. I excused myself to my partner, and followed him out directly. He led me into a distant room, where was Mr. Selby, Mr. Franklin, and the two lasses in masks. I saluted them, and they welcomed me.—I wish you all success, my friends, in your laudable undertaking. We have succeeded, said Mr. Selby; the young fellow knows his danger, and is aware of it; and the good people of the village know how to estimate the fine people at the hall.

You have done more than this, said I; you have taught Mr. Collins how to acquit himself properly on these occasions. But leaving this subject;—Have I not a right, Mr. Franklin, to expect that you should gratify my curiosity, which you have evidently intended to raise.—Explain yourself, said Mr. Selby.—It is I that must explain, said Mr. Franklin; but first let me introduce you to one who longs impatiently to take your hand.—So saying, he called back the sailor who was going out at the door: Sam Elliot; come hither first! When instantly the sailor came, and offered me his hand.—This young man, said Franklin, is a kinsman of mine,

who is desirous to be better known to Mr. Saville. He is *really* a *sailor*, as I am a *farmer*; so that we can hardly be said to *act* a part in the Drama, for the characters are our own.

We saluted in a friendly manner, and I then said, Still it remains to introduce me to the ladies. I expect that you make me amends for the suspense you have caused.—Now comes the explanation, said Franklin; I do confess that I have excited Mr. Saville's curiosity, but it is you, Sir, that must gratify it. I have given him leave to expect an introduction to our two girls here.

Mr. Selby laughed. Surely there needed not so much ceremony to introduce him to two country girls, whom he must think unworthy of his *notice*, after the Freewill's and Jones's who are contending for it.—Spare me, dear Sir! said I, I profess myself an admirer of beauty, when adorned by virtue and simplicity of manners. Do not prejudice these ladies against me; I am no favourite of any ladies here, nor have I any favourite amongst them, but I aspire to the favour of the *worthies* of the sex, and disclaim all other intercourse with it.—Mr. Selby smiled: Hear him, ladies; hear him! This is Mr. Saville, whom I have told you of already. Sir, this is Miss Bennet, my wife elect; I mention this circumstance, that you may guard your

heart.—He laughed at this precaution, and then unmasked the lady, and shewed me a very smart and agreeable brunette; with an intelligent eye, and an arch smile, that said, I can be a wag upon occasion! I begged her to think favourably of me, notwithstanding the company she found me in.

She courtsied gracefully and silently. Then Franklin took the other lady's hand, and led her to me.—This, Sir, said he, is Miss Sophia Melcombe, Miss Bennet's foster-sister, and the sister of her heart, who honours me with her company under my protection this night. She seemed to unmask reluctantly; Franklin assisted her, and disclosed to my eyes the loveliest maiden they ever beheld; a fair complexion, dark blue eyes, with long eye-lashes; auburn hair, inclining to the chesnut; a smile that might have disarmed a tyrant, and such dimples as Love himself might point his arrows at; an air of the most perfect modesty, without any *mauvaise honte*; she looked intelligence, delicacy, and sweetness. I stood surprized like another Cymon, and could now have told Lady Belmour that I had really found an *Iphigene*. I gazed so intently, that I paid my compliments aukwardly, and with some confusion. She blushed at my gazings, and seemed to withdraw from my notice. I recollected myself, and asked her to honour me with her hand in a country-dance.—No, Sir, said she, not after

such dancers as you have engaged this evening.—I hope this will not hinder you, Madam?—No, Sir; excuse me, I shall not dance at all.—I am very sorry for it.

I made the same offer to Miss Bennet, who also declined it very politely. They both spoke in praise of Miss Freewill's dancing, and said it was pity so fine a young lady should have fallen into such company. I agreed with them.—Why, said Mr. Franklin, don't you warn her of her danger? does your knight-errantry extend no farther than to Miss Jones?—I do not deserve that reproach, said I; the case is very different. Miss Jones came hither against her inclination; Miss Freewill came of her own accord, nay, eloped from her friends to come; the one is trying to escape the snares set for her, the other is running blindfold into them. To warn her, would be to raise a hornet's nest about my ears. —You say true, said Mr. Selby; but if that young lady is yet uncorrupted, one would wish to save her from ruin.—Let the farmer give her a hint, said I; his assumed character will warrant so great a liberty.—I will find an opportunity to do it, said he, in the course of the evening.—Mr. Collins came in at this time; he looked round him, and was surprized to see me there.—He bowed. Sir, said he, you are enquired after in the ball-room.—Mr. Selby said, This gentle-

man is our friend.—Then, said Mr. Collins, I may speak before him. Pray, Sir, where shall we have our cold COLLECTION? There are none of the parlours big enough for the company.

Let a table be spread in this room, said Mr. Selby, and let them come in parties, a few at a time; that will be much better than the parade of a supper.—Very well, said Collins, it shall be so then.—He then approached the ladies, and asked Miss Melcombe to take a dance with him. She made him the same answer she did to me.

Mr. Franklin was going into the ball-room, and asked me to go with him. I took him aside. —Tell me, said I, who is that angel?——He smiled.—She is a virgin widow.—A virgin widow! You have raised my curiosity, and you ought to gratify it.—This is not the time for it, said he; but I will do it briefly. She was engaged to young Bennet, the son of our late rector; he was a fine promising young man, who died in his twenty-second year; which misfortune so affected our excellent pastor, that though in appearance he was perfectly resigned, yet from that time his health declined. Mr. Selby now enjoys the living he would have inherited; and he is the son and comforter of Mrs. Bennet, who is one of the best of women.

I must ask Mr. Selby to let you into the particulars of the family, and its past and present

situation; and you must wait with patience the time and season for it.

I will do so, said I; but excuse my present curiosity;—Does Collins aspire to——To what? To that elegant creature?

So, so; what put this thought into your head? —Upon my word, your observation is hasty, and so is your apprehension. Let us stop here. However, I will tell you, she is above Collins's hopes and expectations; her rank and family are superior to yours, Sir. Let this suffice at present; let us return to the ball-room.

I went back, and took my leave of him and the ladies. He said, I shall be glad to see you, Sir, at the parsonage.

I left them reluctantly, and returned to the ball-room, where I found Franklin talking to Miss Freewill. I kept back, till he made me a sign to advance, and I then took his place. Miss Freewill sitting still! said I, how is this? —It is because I chose it, said she. That strange man has been talking to me, and saying the oddest things!—I dare say they were sincere at lea t, said I, for he speaks bold truths.

Why he said some things that *pleased* me, some that *mortified* me, and some that *frightened* me. Do you think I may believe him? What is your opinion of him!

I think he assumes a low character, in order

to be of service to some persons in this company.—So I thought; for he has a great deal of wit, and as much satire.—*Truth*, said I, has a *harsh countenance* to those who are *unused* or *unwilling to* converse with her.—So it seems, Sir; for he tells me that I dance *too well*, and he does not like me for it; that it is immoral for a woman to dress too much, and to display her charms to all the world. He told me that I kept very bad company, and that, as a friend, he advised me to leave it as soon as possible. He said, I suppose you expect to be married? Let me tell you that no man in his senses would marry a woman that had ever set her foot OVER Lady Belmour's THRESHOLD. In short, he gave such a character of the house I am now in, that I do not know what to think of my situation; he said, that *you* were the only honest man in the family, and that I might appeal to you for the truth of what he said; and added, that he would not answer for *you*, if you staid there much longer, for the house was contagious, and the plague was easily catched.—Now, Sir, what am I to believe? Is Lady Belmour such a person as he describes? Is her house a school of vice and folly? Pray tell me the truth.—I must beg, Madam, said I, that you will make a prudent use of what that worthy man has told you; it is but *too true*.

Lord bless me! said she; I was told she was one of the most polite and accomplished women in the world; and that her house was the *only place* to finish a young person's education.

To *finish* it, indeed, said I; her accomplishments and her insinuating manners make her a dangerous friend.

And you, Sir, what makes you stay here, since you do not approve it?—I came here, Madam, at the desire of *my virtuous Guardian*; and I continue here to serve a good girl, who is intangled in a disagreeable situation.—Miss Jones, I suppose?—The same.

Are you not then (she hesitated) attached to Miss Jones?—No otherwise than as to a deserving woman. I would serve her, or you, Madam, or any other lady, without having any *private interest* in view; but this also is a secret, which I beg you not to divulge. You have stepped into the world rather rashly, but this visit will instruct you as much as many years experience. Don't be discouraged; don't alter your behaviour,—Madam; let this subject rest awhile, we will find an opportunity of renewing it hereafter. I see Lady Belmour's eye is upon us; favour me with your hand, and let us go down this dance together.—I have but little spirits to dance, after what I have heard, said she.—Keep up your spirits, Madam; all will end well,

and you will be *wiser*, and *better*, and *happier* for the escape you will have.—So saying, I whisked her into the dance where we happened to be, and we seemed as active as any of the rest.

As soon as the dance was ended, we were summoned to the *collation*. I beckoned Sukey Jones, and, offering an arm to each lady, conducted them into the parlour, and seated them and myself at one end of the table. Lady Belmour shouted—Crosby! look at Saville, with a girl on each hand of him!—They both laughed aloud, and were joined by many of their own company,—Joy, joy to you Saville! happy fellow!

This ought not to be allowed, said Richmore. Saville, you must spare one of the ladies, or admit another gentleman.—At the ladies pleasure, said I.—No, said Miss Freewill, I desire no more gentlemen here.—Nor I, said Miss Jones; I desire no other protector.—Protector! said Lady Belmour; who would have thought it? —Be quiet, Lady Belmour, said I, and let us alone! You are hard to be pleased; sometimes I take too little notice of the ladies, and sometimes too much; I expected that you would have encouraged and applauded me.—She shrugged, and said,—It is a strange mortal! I do not understand him.

I exerted all my spirits, and distinguished myself at supper. I prated incessantly; they plied

me with healths; but I had the address to answer them in fair water for the most part; kept myself sober, and passed for a strong head, and a spirited fellow. The farmer came among us; he made many arch remarks; and, affecting ignorance of polite life and manners, he satirised them in the severest manner. He then remarked upon the alterations in the manners of the lower kinds of people, their absurd imitations of those in upper life, and their degeneracy in consequence. He gave master Collins some *rules* that made him look small; and told him that he hoped he would see enough of high life *to-night*, to make him shun it ever after.

I walked up to him; Enough, farmer, said I! leave off while you are well; this is a night of festivity.—I stand corrected, answered the farmer, and I say no more.

After supper was over, Lady Belmour and her company adjourned to the ball-room, and the inferior gentry sat down to the same table; we went to dancing again.

In the intervals I sought for the two charming rustics, but they were sent home before we rose from supper, as Franklin whispered me. The carriages were ordered at one o'clock, but we did not get away till two. Collins waited on Lady Belmour to her coach. She had an air of chagrin under an assumed gaiety. As soon as

we reached home, I retired to my apartment, and slept away the fatigues of the evening.

On Friday we did not meet together till dinner-time. Lady Belmour seemed grave, and in the pouts. Miss Freewill was grown steady; each seemed to observe the other. Sukey Jones very serious.

Mrs. Crosby observed that we all looked fatigued, she recommended a walk in the air: after we had drunk our wine, we adjourned into the garden. I took a separate walk; my two female friends followed me.—I rejoice, said I, to see you together; let me recommend each to the other as more than *nominal friends;* it is my wish to be of service to you both.—Ah, Sir! said Sukey, I fear there are snares laid for *you* and for *me too:* Lady Belmour is contriving to separate us.—I tell you, Sukey, said I, that I will over-reach her. Let her do mischief at her peril! I will detect and expose her.—Ah, Sir, Lady Belmour is resolved to make Miss Freewill think ill of me, and of you.—But thus warned, she cannot effect it, said I. My dear Madam, whatever you may hear and see, be assured that my *friendship* for Miss Jones is as *innocent* as that of a *brother* to his *sister.*—I believe it, said she, and they shall not make me alter my opinion.—Lady Belmour threatens *me,* Sir, said Miss Jones.

—Let her threaten, said I; we shall see what will come of it.

Miss Freewill said, I have asked Mrs. Watkins how long she intends to stay here; and she says —Why? are you tired of this family?—No, said I; but you promised to make another visit before you returned.—So I will, said she; but I must at least finish my week here.

At our return to the house, Lady Belmour looked at me with an air of threatening, yet affected to be extremely polite and agreeable. I saw she was meditating mischief, but I could not conceive what kind of revenge she would take of me, for my cavalier treatment of her. We made parties at cards. Lady Belmour observed that I was hoarse. I said, I had a slight cold, but I made no account of it.—Sukey, said she, in a voice louder than ordinary, take care of your *friend!* it is your office to nurse him.—In what *manner*, Madam? answered she. I do not perceive that Mr. Saville is ill enough to want my good offices, or I should certainly tender them.—What *manner?* said my Lady: why by ordering some sack-whey for him when he goes to bed, and giving it yourself.

I shall obey you, Madam, answered Sukey.—I laughed, and said, they were both too good to me; for I really supposed it was only a jest. I played whist, and spent the evening in the

usual way. Finding my hoarseness increase, I retired early.—Lady Belmour said, Do not fasten your door, Saville, I shall see your whey administered myself.—Your Ladyship is very obliging, said I; and, wishing them a good night, I retired to my apartment.

I had a momentary scruple about fastening my door, but I thought it would make me appear extremely ridiculous: she will not surely come to bed to me herself, said I; and I think nobody else would have the assurance to attempt it.

When I had been in bed about half an hour, I heard the footing of several people coming my way; I had laid my sword behind my pillow, in case any of the men should affront me. I expected their arrival with some impatience, and a foreboding of something disagreeable, though I knew not what. Presently the door opened, and Sukey Jones entered with a bason of whey, followed by Lady Belmour, and Mrs. Crosby with a candle in her hand. At this sight my fears vanished; I sat up, and, laughing, said, Ladies, you do me too much honour; I am ashamed to give you all this trouble.—No compliments, said Lady Belmour, I always take care of my *guests*; I have more regard for *you*, *Saville*, than you have yet deserved of me, but you will know your *friends* in *time*.—I began to make speeches, but she stopped me.—Come, drink your whey, said

she. Sukey, go round to the other side.—She did so, when Lady Belmour brought a small table, and set down her candle upon it; then pulling Mrs. Crosby by the sleeve, they both hurried out of the room, slapped the door after them, locked it, and took the key away with them, and then burst into a horse laugh. Lady Belmour called out, Good night, Saville! I thought it proper to leave your *nurse* to watch you, and you are both very much obliged *to me.*

The Devil! said I; his cloven foot appears at last. Sukey sat down on a chair, and burst into tears. I laughed.—Come, said I, it is *well* it is no *worse;* take courage, my girl! do not be afraid of me, and I shall not of you.

Oh! said she, this blow was premeditated; but I dare not say all I think, lest we should be overheard.—Sit still a moment, said I; since they have the key of the room, I think it will be proper to prevent their coming in again. I jumped out of bed, put on my stockings, shoes, and night-gown, and went to the door, which I bolted on the inside. Now, said I, we are safe from intrusion; I beg that you will accept of the bed, and I will sit in the great chair.—Indeed I will not, said she. I insist upon your going to bed, and I will sit in the chair; you will increase your cold, and the fault will be laid upon your nurse.—Nonsense! said I: if I had conjectured

the use she would have made of my cold, I would have concealed or denied it. However, as she has shut us up together, let us at least converse freely. Since you have scruples about going to-bed, we will sit up, and contrive how to baffle the schemes of this old Messalina of ours.

I carried the table round to the other side. Now, Sukey, said I, this table shall be the *barrier* between us. I on *this* side, you on *that*; and now let me tell you the use I will make of this adventure. To-morrow I will avow myself your *protector*, and as such I will demand your *bond* of Lady Belmour. When that is obtained, you shall put in execution the plan you have hinted at, but have never yet fully explained to me. Forget our awkward situation; look upon me as a man of honour, and your friend; and as such tell me what you purpose to do with yourself.

After some prefacing, she told me she had a friend, the widow of a master's mate in the navy, who, being left with a small sum of money, and three children, set up a slop-shop in the Borough of Southwark; that she had many friends in the navy who had made it a point to buy of her; that her business was considerable, and she wanted an assistant; that she had offered to take

her as a partner, if she could bring two hundred pounds into the business.—If I get my bond, said she, I intend to put the two hundred into this partnership, and with the rest buy stock into the three per cents, which I am told is the best way of employing it. Very well, said I, you have thought very prudently how to dispose of it, and if you want any further assistance call upon me, for I am resolved to be your *friend*, in every *good sense* of the word.—God reward you, Sir, said she; but how shall I get away from this house?—Leave that to me, said I, I will contrive an elopement for you, and be thought innocent of it myself.—You promise well, said she, and I shall wait the performance. And now I will tell you as much as I know of Lady Belmour's intentions. She has told me several times that I was not open enough to her; that there was something *mysterious* in your attachment to me, and threatened that she would know before long what terms you and I were upon. Since Miss Freewill came hither, she has been still more displeased with me. She told me, what indeed every body sees, that Miss Freewill has a partiality for you, Sir; and said, that if I had not been in the *way*, you would have devoted yourself to her. She hinted, that she wished to promote a marriage between you, which would

have been greatly to your advantage, had not such a *little paltry slut* as I stood in the way of her designs for *you*.

That she believed your cavalier behaviour to *her* was owing to *me;* that she was certain you had imbibed a *prejudice* against her, and that it could proceed from nobody but *me*. She concluded with saying, that she would oblige you to declare yourself shortly; if you preferred me to Miss Freewill, every body should see and bear witness to it; if not, you should set me at liberty to receive other proposals; but that neither of us should deceive *her*, nor yet treat her *impertinently;* and threatened a punishment for us both. You now see how she has executed her scheme, or at least a part of it; and it will be wisdom in you to guard against what remains.—Upon my word, Sukey, said I, Lady Belmour is a scholar of *Machiavel's;* and she has brought me into such a situation, that I can no longer remain indolent in her house; she has found me employment, and I will begin this coming day to execute *my* plan of operations, if you will promise, to second me?—That I will, Sir; for you give me hope that my deliverance makes me a part of it.

As soon as the dawn appeared, I opened the shutters towards the East, and we both paid our homage to the rising sun; admired his beauty

and magnificence, and did not forget our orisons to the Power who created that glorious luminary. This rising sun shall bear witness to our virtuous friendship, said I, and remember it is to *last* as *long* as our *lives!*

We chatted upon various subjects till eight o'clock, at which hour Lady Belmour rapped at the door. I demanded, Who is there?—A *friend*, said she: come, rise, and prepare for breakfast!

I *winked* at Sukey, to give her her *cue*. We shall not come down to breakfast, said I; indulge us so far as to send it into the room.—Oh, very well, said she, laughing, I will do so, whenever you choose to have it.—In half an hour, said I, we will be ready for it.—She went laughing away to make her report.—Now, Sukey, said I, set yourself in order, that you may not appear to have sat up all night. I will receive company in my night-gown; and pray let us receive their compliments with a good grace.—Sukey shook her head, and looked *silly*; I did not look *over-wise*. When I heard the trampling of feet in the gallery, I unbolted the door; and in came Lady Belmour, Mrs. Crosby, and a servant maid, who brought the breakfast equipage.

They both *congratulated* us *maliciously*, and enquired after my *cold*, which was rather worse than better. They laughed, and said a thousand impertinent things. I saluted them both, and

answered them in their own way. At length they retired, saying, Get your breakfast, and we will return again.—Lady Belmour said, I have a *nuptial* present for you.—So, so, said I, the bond is coming.—Pheh, said she, somebody else is coming.—Presently entered a servant with Miss Jones's portmanteau, hat-box, and all the rest of her paraphernalia. I burst out a laughing; Bag and baggage, said I.—I cannot laugh, said she; it is a very *serious* affair.—I will make it a *jest* before I have done, said I, and so shall you; come, eat your breakfast, child!—I have no stomach to eat, said she: what will this end in?—I said every thing to encourage her, but she could not refrain from tears.—Clear up your countenance, said I, here comes our *governess*. —She came in with Mrs. Crosby, and, approaching Sukey, said, I rejoice that you two are come to a right understanding. And now, Madam Sukey, I will restore the *bond* you have behaved so impertinently about; and I choose to do it before Mrs. Crosby, that she may *bear witness* I never intended to *rob* you of it. And *you*, Sir, be pleased to know, that this *prude* received this from Lord C——, as a *consideration* for four months *cohabitation*.

Poor Sukey could not stand this attack; she burst into tears, and withdrew to the opposite window. I took the bond from Lady Belmour,

lest she should withdraw it.—Have a little mercy, Lady Belmour, said I; Sukey has never *deceived* me, nor concealed any thing it concerned *me* to *know*.—Very well, Sir, then I hope you will *reward* her *virtue* (with a sneer she spoke it), by making her a handsome allowance.

Sukey, said I, will you leave that to me, or shall Lady Belmour make the terms? She took courage to speak:—Sir, I acknowledge your protection, and I trust to your generosity in all things.

Then you are a fool, child; but no matter, you will know the world better than to trust it hereafter; and you have behaved so *impertinently* in the *last affair*, that I do not desire to be your *trustee* again. But, Sir, I expect a *present* myself upon this *occasion*, said she.—I have *one* in *store* for you, Madam, said I; but you must wait a *few days* for it.—Oh, as to that, said she, I leave it, as Sukey says, to your *generosity*. But now things are settled between you, I desire you will not play the fool with poor Freewill; upon my life, Saville, that girl likes you too well!

I hope not, Madam, said I; I have nothing to charge myself with upon that young lady's account, nor will she complain of me.—I had *other views* for you, said she, but you are a *headstrong boy*, and will have every thing *your*

own way; I have given up the reins, and what more can I do to gain your good word?—Only one thing at this time, Lady Belmour; that is, order a servant to get my horse ready; I will take an airing before dinner, and I will meet you all at three o'clock.—See, said Lady Belmour, with what an air he commands about him; and I am to take his orders, as a receipt in full for my good offices!—Come, said Mrs. Crosby, be at peace with him; I think he has acquitted himself *surprizingly* well, much better than I expected, I assure you.—Your servant, ladies, said I; I thank you for all your (I hesitated) *goodness* to me.—They courtesied, I bowed; they laughed, I echoed them; they retired, and I execrated them in suitable language.

While I was dressing, I gave her instructions for her behaviour.—And what, said she, must I say to Miss Freewill? I cannot look her in the face.—*Apropos*, said I, I will write a *note* to her, and do you find an opportunity to give it her. I took my pen, and wrote as follows:

"Notwithstanding appearances, believe all that was said to you the evening before last,—distrust those of whom you have been warned; a few days will explain what now appears inexplicable: respect virtue and her friends; there is nothing else upon earth respectable. OBERON."

Having folded and sealed this note, I had

Sukey good-morrow; and went down stairs, through the hall, and into the stable; mounted my horse, and rode to Franklin's as fast as possible. I made haste to tell my friend all that had past since we met at Collins's assembly. He frequently interrupted me by his jest and raillery. His remarks and enquiries at last raised my anger, and I began to swear to the truth of my assertions.—Hear me, said I, and be convinced of my veracity: Miss Jones and myself are both resolved to leave Lady Belmour's; but if we go together, you and all the world will believe our connexion. I want therefore to favour her escape, and to stay some time in this neighbourhood. I hoped to have found you enough my friend to assist me in this design, but your behaviour discourages me. Am I to look upon you as my friend or not? This affair will decide the question once and for ever.

He took my hand, and assumed a serious air.—My friend, you have taken my raillery too seriously; I *admire*, I *applaud* your conduct, and will do every thing in my power to assist you in this affair. Listen to me in your turn! I will send my servant to I——, to take a place in the stage for Miss Jones, for any day that you shall appoint, and then you must contrive the manner of her escape; I will lend you a servant, with a double horse, to convey her to I——, and you

shall command me in any thing further that is for your service. Now are you satisfied with me?

I embraced him. Forgive me, dear Franklin, and accept my thanks! Let your servant go this day and take a place for to-morrow; this night I will favour her escape, and to-morrow I will look out for a lodging for myself.—I will recommend you to one, said Franklin.—You will oblige me infinitely, said I; a clean bed-chamber, and the use of a parlour, will be sufficient. —There is such an one at your service, under this *roof*; and you will do me a favour by accepting it.—Dear friend, I thank you; but I cannot give you the trouble, unless you will allow me to make you an *acknowledgment*.—Don't affront me, Mr. Saville! I can afford a *shelter* for my *friend*, and his company shall repay me. Beside, I shall share in the disappointment of Lady Belmour's snares, and enjoy *her mortification*.

I shall communicate my pleasure to my friend Selby: I shall introduce you to a worthy family, and you shall share in *my* joys and comforts; you deserve the friendship and applause of all good men for your noble behaviour.

I was transported with joy at the prospect he opened to me, and saw in the back *ground* more than was *expressed*. I talked over my scheme of

departure with new spirits, and seemed to tread upon air. I was impatient to return, that I might prepare for the execution of it. In short, I went back another man from what I came thither; got home within my time, drest, and prepared to meet the company at dinner. I came among them with an air of gaiety and humour, answered all their *railleries*, made my repartees with spirit and vivacity. They complimented me upon the alteration in my behaviour; and Lady Belmour was effectually deceived, and enjoyed her success. Miss Freewill looked serious, and seemed to doubt every thing and every body: I paid her particular attention, without neglecting Miss Jones, who seemed to take good omens from my apparent cheerfulness.

Before we rose from table, I was told that a person desired to speak with me. I went out directly; it was Franklin's servant. He told me he had taken a place in the stage for London, and asked what time and place he should attend me with a double horse. I made him follow me to a place nearly under the window of my apartment, and ordered him to mark the place, and be there by dawn of day. The stage was to set out at six, and I allowed two hours for them to reach it. I bade him be diligent and secret, and I would reward his care and trouble.

I sent him off without letting him enter the

house a second time. I went back to the company.—Whom have you had to speak with you, Saville? said Lady Belmour.—A servant of Mr. Franklin's, said I.—Oh! that is a *new* acquaintance of yours, said she.—No, said I, it is more than seven weeks old.—A *farmer* in this neighbourhood! said she.—A *gentleman* by *birth* and education, said I; a *farmer* by *accident*, or rather by *good fortune*; a *friend* of *mine* by *choice* and *election*.—She gave her head a toss, and looked disdain. I went on,—My *friend* reproaches me kindly for giving him so little of my company; he desires to see me to-morrow.—And do you go? said she.—I believe I shall, said I; but I have not made an absolute promise.—You are quite a *monarch*, said she; your will is your law.—Not *absolutely*, said I; it is restrained by the laws of humanity and civilization, as *all kings* ought to be.

You will submit to no laws but your own, said she; and I must leave you to them, or have done with you.—I made her no further reply. We soon after rose from table, and began to break into parties; I took Miss Jones's hand, and led her aside,—Sukey, said I, be cheerful; the *hour* of *deliverance* is at *hand*.—Is it *indeed*? said she. How soon?—This night is the last that you stay in this house, unless it is your *choice* to continue in it.—How can you make such a supposition?

said she.—I smiled, and whispered her. Take an opportunity of retiring up stairs, pack up your things, and get ready to depart.—She answered, I understand you, Sir, and will *obey you* presently.—Lady Belmour catched her word.—*Obedient creature!* said she.—Sukey blushed, and withdrew. I took no notice, but proposed a walk as usual. Miss Freewill avoided me, and seemed in the pouts. The rest of the company walked, conversed, romped in pairs, some danced upon the terrace, and every one amused himself as he pleased.

Miss Jones came down to tea; we made parties at cards; I took an opportunity to whisper her, Retire unobserved after supper.—I was more lively than common. Lady Belmour took notice of my behaviour, and seemed pleased with me. I made several *ironical compliments* to her and Mrs. Crosby; they retorted with equal *sincerity* at least: wit and gallantry flew about. I was more at ease than I had yet appeared, and they seemed surprized at my pleasantry.—I fancy, Saville, said Lady B——, you will hear from Mr. Munden soon; I wrote to him this day, to let him know how happy we all are.—I have no doubt of your Ladyship's good offices upon all occasions, said I; there will soon come a *time* when I shall shew my *gratitude* in a *proper* manner.

She exulted in her supposed success, and

I said every thing that could lull into security. After some time I rose up to retire. When I went into the chamber, I observed that the key was taken away. I asked Sukey who had it?—Myself, said she; I took care of that six hours ago.—That is well, said I; give it me now.—I took it, and locked the door on the inside.—Now, said I, we are safe. I insist upon it, that you lie down upon the bed; I will nod in the great chair, and be ready to wake you at the hour appointed: after you are gone, I will take my repose.—We had a contest upon this point, but at last she consented to take some rest. I took a book and read for some time; at last I fell asleep, and did not awake till between two and three o'clock. I then opened the window, and looked for day-light. I unlocked and unbolted the door; the noise awakened my friend; she feared we were discovered; I soon quieted her mind; she rose and got ready for her journey.—Now, Sukey, said I, a little *critical courage* is required; the opening the hall-door is all that I am in pain about; you must assist me with your hand, if necessary.—Soon after, our attendant appeared; he whistled softly. I beckoned with my hand, and pointed to the door. Now for it, said I. She trembled like a leaf; I encouraged her, but I felt a very disagreeable sensation myself. We took off our

shoes; I took the candle and went first. Follow me boldly, said I. Down stairs we went; she carried our shoes in her hand. We came to the hall-door; she took the candle, and I went to work to take down a large iron bar without noise; it was not a very easy job, but at last I effected it. I made some noise in unlocking the door.—We shall be heard, said she.—No matter, said I; you shall return no more, and I fear nothing for myself.—I opened the door, and beckoned our assistant. Now, Sukey, said I, sit you down, and compose yourself; Robin and I will go up stairs again and bring down your baggage. She would not be persuaded, but went out of the house directly, and stood by the horse, holding the bridle. Robin and I went and fetched her baggage, creeping along like housebreakers. While he was cording the portmanteau, and fastening it upon the horse, I took an affectionate farewell of my friend Sukey, and touched her lips, the *first* and *last* time; for then, as Yorick says, the victory was compleat. Take this pocket-book for my sake, said I, the contents will be of service upon your journey. There is also a direction to my *attorney*, who will negotiate your *bond* for you, and employ your money: there is a letter for him, which you must send to the penny-post. God bless you, and adieu!

The grateful girl could not speak for tears; she kneeled down, she embraced my knees, she lifted up her clasped hands to heaven, and looked a blessing upon me, but she could not articulate a word. Robin mounted his horse; I lifted Sukey upon the pillion, shook her hand, and bade her once more adieu. I told Robin to go softly, and attend to the lady's orders, and then return and appear at the same window, and I would make him a sign to retreat or advance.

I then returned into the house, fastened the door as before with some difficulty, and then retired to my apartment unheard and unseen, bolted my chamber-door, and threw myself upon the bed, where I slept till past seven o'clock; when I was awakened by one of the servants, who asked when and where I would breakfast? I bade her bring the breakfast up stairs in half an hour: I then rose, drew the curtains all round the bed, and waited the maid's arrival. When I let her in, I made signs that the lady was asleep, and must not be disturbed. I told her to order the servant to saddle my horse directly, and I would ride out as soon as I had breakfasted.

I had intended to send my portmanteau to Franklin's by Robin, but had over-slept myself, and missed the opportunity. I dressed myself, put necessaries for present use into my pocket,

packed up my portmanteau, and locked it; then wrote a card and put upon it, with this inscription, 'To be sent to Mr. Saville, by a person who will come for it.' I wrote also, upon a piece of paper which I left upon the table, in a larger hand than common.

'This is to certify whom it may concern, that Miss Jones is gone to London, and that Mr. Saville is to be found at Mr. Franklin's in the village of S——.'

I then went down stairs very composedly; the ladies were not stirring; but I saw several of the men, and wished them a good-morrow: they returned it, and I went into the stable, mounted my horse, and rode to Franklin's; diverting myself by the way with their surprize, and Lady Belmour's resentment at losing two of her *scholars*, who had run away from her *school*.

Franklin was at breakfast; he laughed heartily at my appearance, with my pockets stuffed out like a smuggler. I gave him an account of the night's adventures, and my own elopement afterwards. He congratulated me in the warmest manner, commended my conduct, and welcomed me to his house, which he desired me to use as my own as long as I could make it agreeable to me.

And now being escaped from the dangers and temptations that lately surrounded me, for which I return thanks to Heaven first, and next to the

counsel of my most valuable friend, it is time that I should close this enormous pacquet, which I shall send by the carrier from I——.

Congratulate me, my friend; I am in a virtuous and amiable family, a delightful resting-place, after a laborious passage through an enchanted island full of doubts and dangers.

LETTER XI.

MR. SAVILLE TO MR. JOHNSON.

I SHALL not wait for the acknowledgment of my last pacquet to my dear friend, but proceed to give you, journal-wise, the continuation of my adventures here.

Mr. Selby called here in the afternoon of the day I came hither; we had a most agreeable conversation with him. Franklin informed him of the state of my affairs; and he gave his approbation of my conduct, as you, my friend, would have done, had you been present. He appointed the morrow to bring his *elected*, and her mother, and friend, to spend the day with Mr. Franklin, who desired, on his part, that he would likewise bring Mr. Butler, of whom I have made mention before; and he promised to use his influence with him.—Mr. Butler, said Selby, is a singular character in this age; I will give Mr. Saville some traits of him. He is a man of

deep learning, strict virtue, and invincible modesty, of austere manners, but of the most benevolent and liberal heart, making allowances for every one but himself. His merit at college was very conspicuous, but his modesty frustrated the effects of it. He is *poor*, and, what is *remarkable*, he has no desire to be *otherwise:* a little, he says, suffices *nature;* and he has no *superfluous* vanities or appetites to feed. He has some *opinions* that are not quite *orthodox*, but he does not impose them upon *others;* and nobody discovers them by his *sermons*, which are plain and practical; his tenets are only known to his most intimate friends; a resident curacy is the utmost of his ambition; and the liberty of a better library than he can afford to purchase, is all the luxury he aspires to.

Mr. Franklin now expressed to Mr. Selby some surprize at the delay of his marriage.—It is in compliance with the request of our dear mother, said he; she wishes us to wait till the year is completed, from the death of Mr. Bennet. I pay her the most implicit obedience; the time of my *noviciate* is nearly expired, and I hope within a month to be the husband of my dear Anna Maria, and the happiest of men. In the mean time I am repairing the parsonage, and preparing to receive its mistress. My regard for her is of such a nature, as will, I trust, rather

increase than diminish with time and age; may we be as happy as her excellent parents were! and I cannot wish for greater earthly happiness; but may it continue longer unbroken!—Our friend here, said Franklin, has shewn much curiosity concerning the *Bennet family*, and still more about Miss *Melcombe*. I have promised to use *my* interest with you, Sir, that it may be *gratified*.—Selby smiled. I must first use *mine* with Mrs. *Bennet*. But let Mr. Saville see a little more of us; he can hardly tell at present whether he likes us or not.—I declared that I could tell it with as much certainty as if we had been acquainted for twenty years.

Many lively things passed between Franklin and Selby; and I thought the evening too short, though I wished impatiently for the morrow; and the night seemed as much too long. Mrs. Franklin is a good wife and mother; she is not a shining character in the *conversation* way, but she is all that a man *ought* to wish for in domestic life; an excellent manager without any ostentatious *display* of it; elegantly *neat*, without being a *slave* to her *house* and *furniture;* every thing stands in the *right* place; every thing is brought in the *right season;* you hear no scolding of servants; see no uneasiness in the mistress; the family business goes on as regularly as a good clock that keeps the time without your being

always setting it faster or slower. Every one looks easy and contented, and this I take to be a *criterion* of a well-conducted family. A good and plentiful table, but not covered with incitements to gluttony; plain food neatly dressed; good ale of their own brewing, and wines of their own making, which I preferred to foreign produce, though Franklin insisted upon my drinking his port, which indeed was good, but I chose to conform to the family style in every thing.

At length this impatiently expected morrow came, and brought in its train the family I so much desired to meet; the hours seemed to move slower than usual till they arrived.

You will, I know, expect a particular description of these ladies, though I have given you a slight sketch of the young ones, and they shall therefore be set aside till I have introduced Mrs. Bennet to your acquaintance. She is about forty-five years of age, her aspect is intelligent, but the striking character upon it is benevolence, and a sweet complacency in her manner, that encourages you to converse with her. I think I could reveal every thought of my heart to her. She looks like the parent of all that approach her, and the two young ladies look up to her with equal love and reverence; their eyes refer every question to her decision. It would be impossible to discover which is the *child* of *nature*,

and which of *adoption*, unless you were told it, the regards and attentions are so equally dispensed and returned. Selby pays her the respect of a *son*, and she returns him the same attention, or rather *more* than she pays to her daughters, so let me call them, for no children can be more dutiful, no sisters more affectionate to each other.

Miss Bennet is a charming young woman, but Miss Melcombe is an angel. The one you could wish to be familiar with, but the other you dare not approach too near; without pride or vanity, she inspires respect and awe; a savage could not offer rudeness to her; the form of a Venus, with the chastity of Diana.

She seems rather of a serious turn; Miss Bennet is more lively, though the friends they have lost were nearer to *her* blood, but perhaps not in affection.

But has that fair creature loved already? What then? The object was doubtless worthy of her; yet I could wish she had never loved, and that I was destined to inspire her with the *first* idea of the tender passion. For, oh! my dear friend, I feel that I do love her with the purest and at the same time the warmest passion. To you I have no reserves. I feel that this dear lady is my *fate*. I can think of no other object. I can speak of no other. Bear with me, pity

me, encourage my hope! When I can recollect myself, I will take up my pen again.

I said but little, for my attention was wholly absorbed. I will try to recollect however some part of the conversation. Every person present was highly agreeable to me; the day passed away too fast. I begged Mrs. Bennet's permission to pay my respects to her. She answered; that she looked on me as a member of Mr. Franklin's family, and should be glad to see me with them. The reply was, methinks, rather ungracious; but her smiling and complacent manner concealed it from me at the time: upon reflection, I do not half like it. Franklin spoke handsomely of me, and recommended me to her favour; she commended his kindness and hospitality to me. Selby had told her of my elopement from Lady Belmour's; the ladies all smiled at the circumstances; and Mrs. Bennet said, The consequences of the action must determine the merit of it; that it was pity so young a gentleman should be left without a guide at his first entrance into life. Selby then told her, that I had chosen Mr. Johnson to be that guide, and that he had undertaken the office. She praised this Mr. *Johnson*, and spoke highly of his character and merits from *report*, for she had no

personal knowledge of him. I was abashed at the difficulties before me, for I found I was to undergo a probation, before I could be admitted to the honour of her acquaintance, and received in her family upon my own account.

Mr. Butler came just as we were sitting down to dinner. He only returned the friendly salutations of the company, and spoke no more till the ladies withdrew into the other parlour. Selby whispered me—We do not usually part with the ladies, but Butler will not talk in their company. —He then tried to make him speak. I thanked him for the good offices he had done me. He answered, That it was not he, but his friend Mr. Jarvis, who had written to Mr. Johnson, and at his desire had informed him of my situation.

I said, I was equally obliged to his relation, as the information came originally from him. After this introduction he went on; Selby drew him in, and made him converse upon many interesting subjects; and he spoke well upon all. What a pity that a man of universal knowledge shouldlie under such a disqualification. I find it is necessary to converse with *men*, as well as *books*, to qualify a man for an intercourse with the world: even a *boy*, a *novice* like myself, has more courage in a mixed company, than this man of genius and learning united.

When we went to tea with the ladies, Butler

was mute again, and nothing but monosyllables could be got from him. Selby said, I have discovered that Mr. Saville is a good scholar: he shall come to see us at the parsonage; and, Butler, you shall read lectures to us both.—Franklin begged that he might be allowed to be present, and a day was fixed in the following week for this purpose.

After tea, a party at whist was made; I took every opportunity of recommending myself to the favour of Mrs. Bennet, whose character rose upon me every time she spoke; the young ladies threw off some part of their reserve, and were perfectly agreeable.

I considered this party as a perfect contrast to that I had so lately been engaged in. An agreeable woman, whose conversation is seasoned with wit, and bounded by modesty, is an angelic creature, compared with one whose language is indelicate, and whose eyes assist the tongue in conveying loose ideas to the heart. I compared Mrs. Bennet with Lady Belmour; I looked on one with respect even to reverence, on the other with mingled indignation and contempt. If women knew the interest of their sex, none would throw off at least the appearance of virtue and modesty; a bold woman is shocking.

This amiable family staid supper with us; they went away between ten and eleven. The ladies

went in a neat post-chaise, which is intended to serve the two families when divided: Selby and Butler were their escort, attended by a boy in livery. The day was too short for me, and the night was but a mental enjoyment of the past scenes. I slept not till day-light, and even now I enjoy the recollection at the distance of several days.

In the morning I saunter about with Franklin, and observe his directions to his servants and workmen; I think I will endeavour to learn the theory of this farming business. When I have collected a sufficient stock of knowledge, I may take a farm into my own hands, and live in the same style that Franklin does. If I could procure such a helpmate as I have in my mind's eye, what a paradise would that farm be to me! But I have much ground to go over first.

Thursday. Well, my friend, I have spent an agreeable day at the parsonage. Mr. Butler gave us a lecture before dinner; we are going through the classics again with new pleasure and alacrity. Mr. Selby is every thing; the scholar, the clergyman, the farmer, the gentleman in turn, and shines in all these characters, without affectation in either.

I hoped the ladies would have met us, but was *disappointed.* Franklin and I returned home to supper; he remarked my *disappointment*, and

smiled at it. Selby told me, he hoped I would find the way by myself to his house, when Mr. Franklin was otherwise engaged. I promised that I would very soon show him my sense of the favour.

Saturday Evening. Yesterday I took a walk to the parsonage. Mr. Selby received me with that friendly and familiar air which banishes all reserve. I told him the situation of my heart with regard to Miss Melcombe, and asked his interest with her and Mrs. Bennet. He paused, he hesitated.—I wish, said he, to do you service. I believe you are worthy of that amiable girl; *but*——He stopped.—*But what?* said I. What objection can there be to your attempting to serve me, even if it should not succeed?—That young lady's situation is a particular one; I do not know whether Mrs. Bennet will permit me to explain it; I will however ask her permission in your behalf.

You seem likely to be a cold advocate, said I, discouraged by his air and manner. It seems to me that you do not think me worthy of your friendship, or the dear lady's acceptance.—You are extremely mistaken, said he; I never liked a man so well, upon so short an acquaintance. I am going to give you a proof of it, by inviting

you to my wedding, which I hope will be celebrated next week.

You do me both honour and pleasure, said I; I will be your brideman. But let me implore your good offices with the lady.—I have a thought for your service, said he. On that day, when Mrs. Bennet will grant me almost any favour I can ask, I will beg of her leave to communicate to you the memoirs of the Bennet family. They include Miss Melcombe's history from the hour of her birth, and they will explain the peculiarity of her situation. I will make known your pretensions to Mrs. Bennet; for I will have no clandestine courtships under my roof. Mrs. Bennet must decide the important question; and she will do what is best for you both. You may judge by what I have now said of my frankness and sincerity.—I thank you for both with my whole heart, said I; you have bound me to you by a tye that can never be broken.—After this, I acquainted him with the state of my fortune, as far as I knew it myself.

I returned home to dinner, and to my surprise found a card from Lady Belmour as follows:

Friday.

"Lady Belmour presents compliments to Mr. Saville. Notwithstanding his cavalier treatment of her and her friends, she will be glad of his

company to dinner to-day, to meet an old school-fellow, and to receive a pacquet from Mr. Munden."

I really felt like a school-boy who expects chastisement.—I will not go, said I; let her send every day an invitation!—Mr. Franklin laughed at my distress. I see, said he, she is trying to lure you back again.—And if ever I put myself into her power, said I, I deserve all that follows.

I told him all that had passed between me and Mr. Selby, and he felicitated me. I expect, said he, an invitation to the wedding, and I think it will be a very proper introduction to your courtship: we shall keep you among us, I perceive.—I am happily situated, said I, even to my heart's wishes; but I cannot continue with you, unless you will allow me to become your *boarder*.—We will talk of that hereafter, said he; and led me into the dining-parlour, where I apologized for my stay. Mrs. Franklin received my excuse with a smiling countenance; only saying, If the dinner be spoiled, the loss is your own, and you must bear it patiently.

This card of Lady Belmour's dwelt upon my mind; it seemed to me that she was contriving some scheme to entice me back to her house, lest I should TELL TALES OUT OF SCHOOL. I ld Franklin so.—Suppose, said he, she should

carry you off as her prisoner? She has spirit enough for an *Armida*, but I fear you have not gallantry sufficient for a *Rinaldo*.

This morning, as I was sitting at breakfast with my friend and his family, a servant announced a gentleman on horseback, who desired to speak with me. Show him in by all means, said Franklin, laughing, and do not trust yourself out of doors with him: desire the gentleman to walk in. Presently the door opened; and who should appear but my old school-fellow George Clayton! we saluted with mutual freedom and familiarity. Mr. Franklin desired him to be seated; and said any friend of mine was welcome to use his house. Clayton looked hard at me, and smiled.—You look, said he, like the same Edward Saville whom I knew and loved at Westminster School; your behaviour is like the same person: both are different from what I expected, from the account I have lately heard of you.—*Explain*, my friend, said I. From whom have you heard this account of me?—He smiled. —From Lady Belmour, said Franklin.—Clayton smiled again.—What, said I, are you the school-fellow I was invited to meet?—The very same, said he; but you would not trust yourself in my company.—Yes, in *your* company, said I, but not in that of your *society*.

Well, said he, every one has a right to choose

his company.—I was silent. Mr. and Mrs. Franklin left the room to us: *he* threw a look at me, which seemed to say, How will you get out of this difficulty?—When they were gone, I collected myself and answered him. This charge, from a friend and school-fellow, deserves a serious answer. There are certain situations in which politeness must give way to sincerity. She attacked me with all her arts; I eluded them with all my skill. Finding that I was no easy victim, she threw off the mask, and behaved with the most unparalleled effrontery.

Lady Belmour *first* laid ceremony aside with *me;* and I did the same by *her*. I left her house *sans ceremonie*, and in a way that I intended should show my contempt of her designs and her principles; and I do not repent it.

Clayton repeated,—Unparalleled effrontery! Poor Lady Belmour! Poor George Clayton! thou art one of this society so despised, so contemptible; but which can however retort the contempt it has received. I suppose some canting Methodist-preacher has converted thee, and thou hast condemned thyself to such society as he recommends.—Stop there, George! said I; you never were more mistaken: Lady Belmour and her society are much more likely to be converted to Methodism than myself. At the decline of a profligate life, people are glad to

take shelter in implicit faith, and to embrace whatever is offered as a substitute for *virtue*, which requires labour and self-denial; while faith carries them by a short road to the *hope*, I might rather say the *presumption*, of future happiness. There are many different roads through life; I have chosen mine, you have a right to choose yours. I see with concern it is not what I could have wished for you; but I give you up to it, and break off this conversation, in which both of us have spoken too freely; let us excuse each other, and part like friends.

Perhaps we may, said he. Let us compromise; but I am sorry to see you so resolute. I hoped to prevail upon you to return with me to dinner at Lady Belmour's; must I give it up? —You must indeed, Sir: I will not again enter her house.

If you would venture yourself with me, said he, I would pass my word for your safe return. I assumed a serious aspect.—You are going to preach again, said he.—Not to you, Sir, said I.—Well, if I must give up my commission, here, said he, taking a letter out of his pocket, here is something for you; it is from old Munden: you did not learn these precise notions from him, I am sure.—I took the letter, and read it. I shall enclose it to you in this pacquet; it contained a remittance of two hundred pounds in

Bank notes. I considered a minute, and then asked him to wait a little, while I wrote a note to Lady Belmour. He again entreated me to return with him; and tried every art, to no purpose.

At last he threatened me with the vengeance of her Ladyship. He teazed me out of patience, and we parted with barely civility; for he refused to carry either letter or message with him; and, had I not kept a guard upon myself, he had obliged me to quarrel with him.

He left me very much out of humour; and when Franklin returned, I related the whole of our conference to him. He applauded my behaviour, saying, It was more difficult to stand my ground against *raillery*, than against temptation, passion, or any seduction whatever, and I considered what passed between me and Clayton as the conclusion of my acquaintance with him and the whole society.

Upon further consideration, I determined to write a note to Lady Belmour, in answer to her card to me, and to take a civil leave of her and her associates. She had been disappointed in her expectations upon my pocket, as well as my person, and I resolved to discharge all appearance of obligation to her; accordingly I sent the following note, enclosing a bill for thirty pounds.

'Mr. Saville presents compliments to Lady Belmour; the same motives that impelled him to leave her house, prevent his accepting her polite invitation to dinner; he returns thanks for the civilities he received at her mansion, and begs her acceptance of the *trifle* enclosed, being the *consideration* which her Ladyship *demanded* of him in return for her *entertainment* and *good offices*, of which he shall always retain a perfect *remembrance*.'

Sunday—I spent in the duties which I had too much neglected for several months past. Mr. Selby is devout and proper in his offices, without affectation, pedantry, or formality.

Mrs. Bennet and her two daughters (so let me call them), were at church, and with them another young woman, whom they allowed to visit them, and improve by conversing with them; her name is Grove, a farmer's daughter, lately come to a pretty fortune by the death of a grandmother.—Franklin tells me she is laid out for a wife for Mr. Collins; and Mr. Selby does all in his power to promote the match.

In the evening Mr. Selby called upon us; he delivered Mrs. Bennet's compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Franklin, and their guest, desiring their company to dine at her house on the morrow. We accepted the invitation with pleasure,—But when, said Mr. Franklin, is your happy day?—

You shall know that to-morrow, said he. Mr. Collins will be my other brideman; Saville has offered, Miss Melcombe will be his partner; Miss Grove, Collins's.—Do you know, said Franklin, that Saville had a mind to be jealous of Collins's attention to Miss Melcombe?—It is a proof of his penetration. Collins did actually make an offer of himself to Miss Melcombe. He was refused, but not with the pride and disdain that many fine women show upon such occasions. He was told she was not a proper wife for him; but Mrs. Bennet commended his intention to marry, and asked him to let her have the honour to recommend a wife to him. She has since pointed out Dolly Grove as a proper person. Collins thanked her, but said he must take some time to get over his disappointment with Miss Melcombe; and he looks at her, as if unwilling to give up his hopes.—But he is refused, said I?—Selby smiled, he is *absolutely*.—Then I will hope, said I.

I enclose Mr. Munden's letter. Let me have the pleasure of hearing from you soon.

And believe me always

most gratefully yours,

E. Saville.

LETTER XII.

MR. MUNDEN TO MR. SAVILLE.

MY DEAR BOY,

YOUR last letter was an impertinent one; but I have since heard, with great pleasure, that you are come to a better way of thinking.—Lady Belmour is your true friend; she excused you to me; she told me you would, in due time, be all that I wished you.

Her last confirms her prognostics concerning you. She says you are so much improved both in person and behaviour, that I should hardly know you. But you are an obstinate self-willed fellow, and will not suffer her to lead your choice in any thing, and so you have fallen in love as you thought proper, you young dog you! However, I am glad that you have discovered yourself to have certain passions and propensities, and that you can speak for yourself upon some occasions; it will give you proper courage to speak upon others, aye upon all.—Now mind what I say, Edward, for I am a veteran in these cases. —Let this girl be your *friend*, or your *companion*, or what you please, but don't let her be your *mistress* indeed; keep her humble and obedient to your will and pleasure.—Don't go to make her a settlement, for that is to make her inde-

pendent of you, but make her more or less, according as she deserves of you.

When you come to town, I will teach you how to manage her; in the mean time I send you a remittance of 200l. I suppose you will want to make the girl some presents, and you must also make an acknowledgment to Lady Belmour; a bank note of 30l. will be sufficient. When you come to London, I will settle accounts with you, and give up my trust.—I should think a few years travel would be of service to you; we will speak of that and other matters at your return.—I hope yet to make a great man of you, Edward, and then I shall be proud of you, as the work of my own hands.—Present my best compliments to Lady Belmour and her friends; and believe me,

Your affectionate and sincerest friend,

RICHARD MUNDEN.

LETTER XIII.

MISS JONES TO MR. SAVILLE.

DEAR SIR,

As you were my deliverer from a state of vice and folly, you have a right to be informed what use I make of my liberty. I am happy in the situation which I mentioned to you. Your lawyer was so kind as to advance me two hundred pounds

upon my bond, and takes upon him to negociate mine with Lord C———; and this obligation I owe likewise to your goodness. Mrs. Searle, my partner, has very good business, and she has many friends in the navy. I pass for a widow, and all her friends are mine also.

Constant employment drives away disagreeable thought, and I feel myself happier than ever I was before; and I hope to obtain that peace and *tranquillity* which attends those who are commendably employed.

As often as I return thanks to my Creator for his infinite mercy in rescuing me from a state of sin and folly, and giving me comfortable hopes of peace here, and happiness hereafter, I shall remember my benefactor both in my prayers and praises; and I will implore for him every blessing that heaven can bestow.

I am, dear and worthy Sir,
Your most obliged and grateful servant,
S. JONES.

LETTER XIV.

MR. JOHNSON TO MR. SAVILLE.

DEAR SIR,

I OWE you many acknowledgements for the entertainment your packquets have afforded me.

I congratulate you on your *victory*, and on

your *defeat* also, for you are absolutely a captive, though a voluntary one.

The first time the heart is subdued is commonly the *crisis* of our lives; and the following part takes its character from this event. An early attachment to a virtuous and amiable woman cultivates and ripens every great and noble quality; an attachment to a bad woman leads to a life of folly, vice, and misery.

I would not wish a young man to marry so early as at your age; but I would have him engaged in a courtship and correspondence with a woman qualified to be in time an amiable wife and mother; I would have him meet with some difficulties, as an exercise to his patience and fortitude; I would have him subdue them by his virtue and activity, and at length receive the reward of his courage and fidelity. What a fortunate man are you, to fall into the acquaintance and obtain the friendship of such a family! It is not a very easy thing for a good young man to choose a wife that is worthy of him.—The young women of the present times are very agreeable companions for an hour, for an afternoon's conversation, for an evening's entertainment; but for wives!—look at the wives of the great world!—look at the husbands too, see—judge—reflect! and thank God you have escaped the danger of a fashionable wife. The pupils of folly and fop-

pery are terrible companions for life. I would send those young men I love, into the country for a wife; and warn them not to make her too well acquainted with a town life afterwards. This latter part of my lesson may yet be in time for you; and it is not certain that you may not want the former: you have a great deal of ground to go over, before you are sure of Miss Melcombe.

Study agriculture, study economy; both are necessary, both will be beneficial when you are settled for life.

I respect Mr. Franklin, I love Mr. Selby, I revere Mrs. Bennet and her amiable daughters; cultivate their friendship and esteem, my young friend; deserve their affection, and you will obtain it.

Continue your narrative to me; if it is possible, let me know the history of the Bennet family.

Every thing that is interesting to you, will be so to your friend,

JOHNSON.

LETTER XV.

MR. SAVILLE TO MR. JOHNSON.

THANK you, dear Sir, for your paternal lessons, they can never be unseasonable or unwelcome to me.

At the conclusion of my last, I told you I was engaged to spend the following day at Mrs. Bennet's; it proved a delightful one to me.

Miss Melcombe plays sweetly; she speaks French, she reads Italian, she has been taught the elements of several sciences; but she conceals them with as much care as most ladies take to display them.

My proficiency in music seemed to recommend me to the favour of the ladies. Mr. Selby plays on the violin, Mr. Franklin on the bass-viol: we played several trio's and quartetto's in the evening, and sung many songs, chiefly out of Handel's compositions.

The wedding-day was declared by Mrs. Bennet to be next Thursday, and all the company present were invited; we are to breakfast at Mrs. Bennet's, and to dine at the parsonage. Mr. A. Collins is invited to meet us.

On Tuesday morning I took a walk to the parsonage: the young ladies were there, looking over the house. I was permitted to accompany them home with Selby. Miss Melcombe leaned upon my arm; and yet, though I had her to myself, I could not for my life begin the subject I most wished to engage her ear to listen to.

I suffered this precious opportunity to escape me, waited on her home, and left Selby at the house,—happy man!—and returned alone to Mr.

Franklin's, accusing myself all the way of folly and false delicacy.

As I was buried in these ruminations, two men came by on horse-back; they stopped, and called to me by name. It was Lord S—— and Mr. Clayton, two of Lady Belmour's disciples, whom I have introduced to you before.

I saluted them coolly, and was going forward; but Clayton called out—Do not run away, Saville; suffer me to say a few words to you, they shall not be of the hostile kind. I behaved rudely to you last time I saw you: I ask your pardon.—So saying, he jumped off his horse, and came and took my hand. I gave it him cheerfully, and we walked together, he leading his horse.

Lord S—— said, Who was that *divine girl* that was hanging upon your arm this morning, Saville?—A young lady who is under the care of Mrs. Bennet, said I; but not an acquaintance for your Lordship or Lady Belmour.—I know that, said he, laughing.

Come, Saville, do not be afraid of us, we are not so bad as you think us; we respect those who are *really virtuous* women, though we make free with those who only *pretend* to be so. But pray, my good modest friend, answer me a question that I have long wished to ask you; What is your opinion of Miss Freewill?—I will answer

you, said I. I believe she is a virtuous girl, but an indiscreet one.

I am glad to hear you say so, for—shall I confess it? I adore that girl! I love her up to marriage, if I was certain——But, Saville, did you never make *love* to her, in *jest* or in *earnest*? —No, never, upon my honour! but I paid her some *attention*, because I thought she deserved it.—Thank you, Saville, you have set my heart at ease; I was confoundedly jealous of you. *She paid you some attention, though*—too much for me. She speaks of you with emotion, and will not suffer any body to open their lips against you.—That is owing to her generosity, said I; she defends an innocent man when he is unjustly traduced.

Pray, said Lord S——, what is become of Miss Jones? She is one of Mr. Saville's flock. You must enquire somewhere else, my Lord, said I. I have staid in this neighbourhood to convince every body; that I have no connexion with Miss Jones.——A *Joseph*—yea, a *Joseph!* said Lord S——; but that fine girl that I saw you lead to-day, who is she?—My Lord, you must excuse me.

I wish, said Clayton, you would give me a *bill* upon Miss Freewill.—I do not understand you, said I.—A bill of *credit*, said he. Say that you know me; that I am an honest fellow, and

so forth.—Not I, indeed, Sir; make your *own credit* with her.

We came to a style that led to Franklin's house.—Gentlemen, *bonjour!* said I, and jumped over the style; they wished me a good day, and went their own road.

I told Franklin my adventure, and worried myself and him with doubts and fears of I know not what. I wished Miss Melcombe had never been seen by Lord S——. Franklin laughed at me.—Surely, said he, in such a country as ours there is nothing to apprehend; are we not under the protection of the laws? what are you afraid of?—I do not know exactly, said I; but wherever there is something to *hope*, there is always something to *fear*.

Friday. The day is come and gone, that was wished for so long. Selby is happy, while I am in doubts and fears; however, my hopes rise in my heart's barometer. I am not *hated*, I am not rejected; I have been heard with complacency, if not with pity. We met at Mrs. Bennet's, and breakfasted there, and from thence went to church. There was an air of sedate cheerfulness upon the whole company; but none of the rapturous and riotous joy which blazes for a day and then expires. The excellent Mrs. Bennet called upon her daughter to be cheerful. Some girls, said she, think it necessary to be-

have as if they were averse to their own wishes. Detestable affectation! It is a very bad compliment to the bridegroom, to look unhappy or reluctant upon these occasions.—I will endeavour to behave as becomes your daughter, Madam, answered the amiable bride.—Selby's eyes spoke his grateful sensibilities. We arrived at the church.

Mr. Butler prepared for the sacred office; Mr. Selby offered his hand to his bride, she gave her's with apparent pleasure. The office was performed; the lady *spoke out* her *part* of it; her mother, by a nod, encouraged her to do so. We all stood round the table. I looked a thousand tender things to my fair partner, and took courage to whisper softly to her, What a solemn office! What sacred words! How sweet to speak and to hear, between two hearts united and consecrated by virtue; they kindle my wishes and aspirations after the same happiness. Oh, that I dared to *say* my hopes! She blushed and looked down.

After the ceremony was concluded, we adjourned to the Parsonage, and there renewed our congratulations and wishes for their happiness.

Mr. Selby thanked Mrs. Bennet for the inestimable present she had made him (she gave the bride at the altar).—My future behaviour will show how dear it is to me; it is my wish

and hope to restore the blessings which time has ravished from you, and to be your *son* in every respect.—With *pleasure*, with *pride*, I acknowledge my son! said she.—I have a particular favour to ask of my dear mother, said Mr. Selby, but it shall not be *just now*; she will give me her company *alone* to hear it.—She smiled: I cannot think what it can be, said she; however, it must be a *very strange one*, that I can refuse my son upon this day. The bride smiled like an angel, but her joy overflowed at her eyes; her mother embraced and blessed her. She held out her hand to Miss Melcombe, who kissed it; she embraced her.—My dear Sophia! my other daughter! my sister! said the bride; will you receive a *brother* from me? Mr. Selby then saluted her.—Let me be your *brother* at present, said he; perhaps hereafter I may aspire to the honour of being your *father*. Sophia sighed; the tear started from her eye.—How sweet to have a father! said she; and how unfortunate to be forgotten by him!—Mrs. Bennet took her hand. Be comforted, my child; Heaven, in lieu of *that father*, has given you a mother, a sister, and a brother; and perhaps your father may one day recollect and acknowledge his child. Let us not think of any thing this day that can sadden our hearts.—Our conversation afterwards became general; we walked in the garden before dinner; Mr.

Selby took Mrs. Bennet aside, and kept her some time; after which he came and took my hand to lead me to Mrs. Bennet.—I have explained your pretensions, said he, to my mother; you must now speak for yourself.

I did so, but with more hesitation than I wished; and afterwards I took your last letter out of my pocket, and presented it to Mrs. Bennet as a kind of credential, in respect to my proposal. She read it over.—It is, indeed, much in your favour, Sir; but I must blame *you*, my son, for giving Mr. Saville room to expect to see the *memoirs* of our *family;* you see he has raised the same expectation in Mr. Johnson also: they were never meant to be shewn out of the family.

I do not see how it could well be avoided, said he. As to Mr. Johnson, you know his character, and I should think you might allow him to see the Manuscript without *one* objection. To say truth, said Mrs. Bennet, it has less impropriety to trust *him* with it, than so *young* a *gentleman* as him before us.

I will answer, Madam, for Mr. Saville's honour; I know he may be trusted. I pass my *word* for him.

Permit me, Madam, said I, to offer myself as a candidate for the dear lady's favour; I will 'mit to any trial, to any time of probation, to onditions.—But, Sir, Miss Melcombe has

a *father living*.—I will apply to *him*, if I may be so happy to obtain your favour and recommendation.

Well, Sir, it is my son's request; I cannot refuse his warm exertion of his influence in your behalf on this day. You shall read the papers; you shall send them to Mr. Johnson, and he shall advise you and us.

Mr. Selby expressed his joy and gratitude in proper terms. We returned to company, and our friends looks told us they were no strangers to our business. I drew Miss Melcombe aside; I made my confession with more courage than I expected; she heard me with complacency: she told me she had a *father*, who had the only right to dispose of her. She allowed me to visit her as a *friend*, and did not forbid me to hope for her favour.

Mrs. Bennet took Mr. Collins and Miss Grove apart; she recommended them to each other. She seemed the Juno-Matrona; the arbiter and protector of conjugal happiness.

At two o'clock we sat down to a well-ordered and plentiful dinner; we sat some time afterwards. We played, we sung; every one endeavoured to promote the happiness of the rest.

At ten o'clock the ladies all retired. Mrs. Bennet and Miss Melcombe slept at the Parsonage: we took the hint, and withdrew soon after,

wishing Mr. Selby a long continuance of his domestic happiness.—Let us see you often, my dear friends, said he.—You may be sure of *me*, said I; you have bound me to you for life.—We came away at eleven.

At my return home, I found a letter from Mr. Clayton, the contents as follows:

Dear Sir,

I beg your excuse for my past behaviour, and that you will grant me a favour, which will accelerate my happiness. It is, that you will speak a word in my behalf to the charming Miss Freewill, to whom I have offered myself in marriage. She thinks and speaks of you in high terms, such as would make me mad with jealousy, if I did not believe you to be in love in another place. Forget my vanity and folly, and do an act of generous friendship for your old school-fellow and friend,

GEORGE CLAYTON.

I sat down and wrote the following answer immediately, for Mr. Franklin's servant to carry in the morning.

Sir,

I must beg to be excused as to the credentials you require of me; I am not sufficiently acquainted with Miss Freewill to use so great a

liberty; nor with your conduct and character, to be able to pass my word for your *virtue* to a *lady*, though I might for your *honour* to a *gentleman*. However, your resolution to marry, confirms my hope of your becoming a good member of society, and I wish you success in your present laudable pursuit; for, in my opinion, the path of virtue is the only road to happiness.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most humble servant,

E. SAVILLE.

Saturday Morning.

I have just received the precious manuscript from Mr. Selby; it affords me sufficient subject for meditation of every kind. I am allowed to send it to Mr. Johnson.

LETTER XVI.

MR. SAVILLE TO MR. JOHNSON.

I CAN now tell you that I am as happy as a man in a state of probation can be.

I have been permitted to explain myself; to open my heart to the mistress of it. She heard me with complacency, though not with emotion; she smiled upon me, and checked the ardour of my declaration.

I hope, said she, I am above affectation or de-

ceit. I would not raise hopes I do not mean to encourage; our acquaintance is of a very late date: your character is not yet established, mine is hardly formed. I have made no resolution for or against marriage. I think it is the most eligible state, and that a woman stands in need of a protector through life. I think very well of you, Mr. Saville. Indeed I like your company too well to give up your acquainfance, unless there was a necessity for it.

I blessed her for this declaration, and was going to express my gratitude as a lover. But she stopped me.—Do not interrupt me, Sir, I have premeditated what I am saying. I will receive you as my *friend*, and as a *candidate* for my favour, but not as a contracted lover. We will be good friends, and remain upon this footing for one entire year from the date of our first acquaintance.

I sighed. Oh Sophia, this is an act of arbitrary power; this is a cruel quarantine! but what am I to expect at the end of this long, long probation? In the course of this year, said she, we shall know each other's disposition, our virtues, and our faults; is it not better that we should have a reason for our liking or disliking each other? Mr. Selby waited patiently his time of probation.

Well, my dear Madam, but at the end of the

year what am I to expect?—Nothing certain, Sir; if we then like each other well enough to make a serious engagement, Mrs. Bennet will apply to my *father* for his consent, and then you will have my permission to make proposals to him. You know how I am circumstanced; and I am resolved to perform my duty to my parent, however he may behave towards me.

Hard terms, my dear lady! but such as I must accept, if I can obtain no better. I devote myself wholly to you, Madam, dispose of me as you please: yet I murmured at her insensibility; we joined our friends, who were apprized of all that had passed between us.

Sophia looked triumphantly; I rather dejected. Mrs. Selby challenged me; What Sir, are you dissatisfied with my Sophia; if so, I shall declare against you!—I submit, Madam, to her laws and yours.—Very well, said Mr. Selby, then all is as it should be.

From this time Sophia has treated me with more ease and freedom: she encourages me to behave as a friend, but will not hear a word in the style of a lover. In all other respects I am the happiest of men.

Mr. Selby has recommended Mr. Butler to a curacy very near; he has given him a room in his own house, where he comes and goes whenever he pleases, with free access to a very good

library, the late Mr. Bennet's, to which Mr. Selby has made considerable additions.

Sometimes we read and converse with the learned, but oftener with the ladies, in the most delightful of all society, where the senses polish and improve each other.

These, my dear friend, are the true, because the rational pleasures, such as increase by reflection.

I have a letter from Miss Jones, which I enclose to you. I rejoice that she is likely to be so well established the remainder of her life, and hope the former part of it will be forgotten. As I have looked upon her as still in some degree under my protection, I am happy to be relieved from any further interposition in her affairs. But I do not perfectly understand what she means by putting myself upon my guard, and being aware of some impending danger to *myself*, or *those I love*.

Adieu, my friend. I expect the return of my pacquet; and a letter with your strictures upon it.

Yours sincerely,

E. SAVILLE.

EPISODE.

MEMOIRS of WILLIAM BENNET, CLERK, AND HIS FAMILY.

At the request of my dear children, I sit down to write these memoirs of the most interesting events of my life, for their satisfaction, and the benefit of our posterity.

The virtues of our ancestors, are examples for us to imitate; their failings and defects are warnings for us to avoid them. We can only propose the example and the warning; but the right application of both, depends on those who receive them. If the soil is prepared by due cultivation, it will bring forth twenty, fifty, or an hundredfold. May such be the increase in the minds of my amiable and beloved children!

I am descended from a good family, which formerly lived in a state of affluence; but by the expences of our ancestors, and the increase of luxury, was reduced to a small estate, which descended to an eldest son: my father was the younger brother; he was a clergyman of the church of England, who united the Christian faith and morals, in his doctrine and in his practice. I am the younger of two sons; the extravagances and profligacy of the eldest (who died at twenty-five years of age, of the conse-

quence of his irregularities) obliged my father to restrain himself in his expences for me. I early declared my wishes towards the profession of my father, whom I aspired to resemble in every respect. My godfather, assisted him in the expence of an university education for me. I went through my studies there with credit and success; and afterwards took upon me the office of college-tutor to several youths of fortune and family. Among these was a young gentleman, whose name was *Lucas*. He was bred up at Westminster School, where, by his riotous companions, he was early initiated into all the mysteries of vice and folly, which are but too well known to the youth of the present age: from thence he was sent to Oxford, where he made acquaintance with some young men of an enthusiastic turn, who led him into the abyss of Methodism. A mind, convicted of sin, is glad to lay hold on any thing that will be accepted as a substitute for virtue; but in a short time after, his reason revolted against this implicit faith. From one extreme point he flew to the other; he read the works of Bolingbroke, Hume, and Voltaire, and fancied himself convinced by their doctrine: he renounced the tenets of Christianity, and became a professed advocate for Infidelity.

In this state I found him. I put into his

hands, Tillotson, Clarke, Sherlock, and Mr. Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity. By reasoning upon them, I had the happiness to convince him of his errors in judgment, and to reconcile his reason to his faith; and he once more owned himself a Christian.

He publicly declared his obligations to me. I gained much credit by his conversion. He wrote to his mother and told her how much he valued me. In consequence I received a most polite invitation to accompany him into Staffordshire; my friend urged me to accept it: and, with my father's permission, I attended him to his family seat, where I met with a joyful welcome from the family, which consisted of Mr. Lucas's mother, a respectable lady; Mrs. Horton, her sister; a woman-grown daughter of each of these ladies; and another young woman, a relation and dependant upon the family.

Mr. Lucas had been early spoiled, by the fond indulgence of his mother to her only son. But he now professed a reformation of every kind, and attributed all to my friendship. Mrs. Lucas offered me presents of value, which I refused; and said, that her son's friendship was my best recompence. The young ladies were both handsome and amiable. Miss Lucas was generally thought the finest woman. Miss Hor-

ton was much lower in stature; but whenever she spoke or smiled, she had a thousand inexpressible graces about her mouth; her person seemed to receive new animation, and every word she spoke found its way directly to the heart. To mine, it spoke a language new and expressive; and made an impression there, which neither time nor absence could ever erase. I dared not declare my passion, but preserved a distance and reserve becoming my situation and late acquaintance. There was however a secret intercourse between us, though we seemed mutually afraid of each other. Mr. Lucas presented me to all his neighbours as the chosen friend of his heart, and one to whom he owed great obligations. Our visit passed agreeably, upon the whole; but I had two causes of pain at my departure; one, a too apparent attention of Miss Lucas to myself; the other was, the uncertainty of my situation with respect to Miss Horton.

Soon after our return to Oxford I received a letter from Mr. Withers, with a proposal for me to accompany Mr. Lucas in his intended tour through France and Italy. I begged leave to decline this offer, as my father was advanced in years, and declining in his health.

This answer was not satisfactory. Soon after I received a letter from Mrs. Lucas, requesting

me, for her son's sake, to give him my company. She invited me to repeat my visit, and to settle the terms of our agreement, as soon as we could be spared from college duties.

I sent this and the former letter to my dear father, and desired him to answer this proposal for me in whatever manner he pleased. My father declared against it in the strongest manner. He answered Mrs. Lucas's letter, declining the proposal; at the same time acknowledging her kindness and generosity towards me, and begging the continuance of her friendship and esteem for me. But to *me* he gave much stronger reasons for his refusal.

" I have seldom known a young man make " this Tour, said he, but he returned the *worse* " for it, either in *principles* or *practice*, but most " commonly in *both*."

After this admonition from my father, I persevered in my refusal. Soon after, I was honoured with a letter from Miss Lucas, acquainting me that her mother was not well enough to write herself, but that she requested me, by *her hand*, to look out for her, and to recommend a proper person to be her son's companion; for that he would not permit any person to assume the title of his governor.

I acquitted myself of this commission. I recommended a worthy young man of the name of

Bates, who gladly accepted the offer. He accompanied Mr. Lucas and myself on a visit to his mother, where the terms were settled, and every thing agreed. While we were there, Mrs. Lucas, who had long been in a declining state, died. Her son and daughter were deeply affected by her death.

During my second visit here, I explained myself to Miss Horton, and solicited her favour. She received my address with modest confidence; she confessed it gave her pleasure, but she foresaw a great obstacle in the way of our mutual happiness.—Miss Lucas loves you, Sir, said she; she has a good fortune, she has many fine qualities; I shall be sorry to be a hindrance to your making your fortune. I assured her of my love, and of my honour; that if she would share my lot, which was likely to be an humble one, I would refuse the highest rank or fortune for her sake. We agreed to keep our engagement secret, till such time as I should be in a situation to marry; and to conceal our mutual affection from the eye of observation. Miss Lucas behaved with the utmost attention and politeness to me. I staid only till Mr. Lucas made the necessary preparations for his departure, which made our adieus very affecting on all sides. I accompanied him and his companion to Harwich, from whence he proposed going through Holland

and Flanders before he should make the tour of France.

At parting he embraced me with tears in his eyes. I shall never forget the obligations I owe you, my dear Bennet; I shall fulfil my mother's request, and my own inclination, in giving you the first living that is vacant; I promise it to you, and you may rely upon my word.

I made my grateful acknowledgments in suitable terms; I recommended Mr. Bates and him to each other's care, and returned with a heavy heart to Oxford.

During my stay with him, I received a letter from the gentleman who had been guardian to Mr. Lucas, which contained a formal proposal of Miss Lucas's hand and fortune, which he was authorized to make me; and acquainted me that the lady's fortune was full ten thousand pounds.

My confusion was so great upon reading this letter, that my father desired to know the cause of it. I then opened my heart to him, and told him of my engagement to Miss Horton.—There is no room for a moment's doubt, said my father; even if your heart were not so deeply attached, an engagement of this kind is sacred.

I am entirely of your opinion, Sir, said I; I will write that I am engaged already, and cannot accept the proposal.—Then you will act like

an honest man, said he, and you may expect the blessing of heaven upon your engagement.—I wrote accordingly, that my heart and my promise were already engaged, and that I had not the shadow of a wish to be released from my vows.—I wrote also to Miss Horton, acquainted her with the proposal I had received, gave her a transcript of my answer to it, and referred myself entirely to her pleasure in respect to the declaring of our engagements.—I waited with impatience, and not without uneasiness, for an answer to my letter; a thousand disagreeable apprehensions disturbed my mind: at length the expected letter came, and opened a new scene of action to me, which decided the principal events of my life. I transcribe it in this place.

"Dear Sir,

Your letters have produced strange effects; it was some time before I could compose my mind enough to give you an account of them.

Our engagement is, indeed, *declared;* but I must go back to the time when my cousin was expecting your answer to her proposal.

She threw out hints to my mother and me, that she had a treaty of marriage under consideration, and that she was certain both of us would approve her choice.

At length Mr. Withers came, and brought

your answer; which produced a great alteration in Miss Lucas, who grew silent, reserved, and unhappy. She shunned our company, except at meals, and then withdrew soon after. Your letter to me arrived a few days after, and I then understood perfectly the cause of her uneasiness.

My mother begged her to communicate the cause of her concern to her; but she desired her to excuse her. She looked at me as if expecting me to speak to her. I looked down, blushed, and kept a profound silence. Whether my behaviour raised her suspicions, I don't know; but one day, while I was walking in the garden, she went into my room, looked into my drawers, and found there several of your letters, but above all your last to me. This discovery roused her from her silent melancholy. She came down stairs, rang the bell violently, and ordered the servant to call me: "Bid Miss Horton come to me." When I went into the parlour, her passion exceeded all description. She called me traitor! deceiver! every thing that was bad. I guessed the matter presently; I pitied her; and endeavoured to keep my temper and my resolution. I gave way in silence, and let her run herself out of breath.

When my mother came in, she found us in this situation; she was astonished past expression, and could only say, What is the matter?

—Here, Madam! see here what a daughter you have! what a friend I! what a serpent I have fostered in my bosom, and now it stings me to death!—So saying, she gave my mother your letter, and then sunk back into her chair.

I besought my mother not to judge of me hardly, that I could not accuse myself of any thing wrong, except concealing your addresses *from her;* as for the rest, I had not deceived or betrayed any one. That I had reason to complain of my cousin, for looking into my papers; but that she had been punished severely for it, and I forgave and pitied her.—*Pity me!* said she; am I fallen so low as to excite your pity? No, I hate, detest, and despise you! Go from my house, I will harbour you no longer!

My dear cousin, moderate your passion, and hear me; suffer me to tell my story, and to justify myself.

I will hear *nothing*; I know enough: you have *robbed* me!—Robbed you, Madam!—Yes, robbed me of the only thing I valued upon earth: have you not stolen *Bennet's* heart from me?—No, Madam, he made a voluntary gift of it to me, before you had any *pretensians* to it.—Don't talk to me: get out of my sight! I shall go distracted if you remain here!—My mother said, Maria, leave us; go to your own chamber, and I will come to you soon.

I left them together, and went up to my chamber, where I spent a wretched hour, accusing myself as if I had committed the greatest crime. At length my mother came to me; I threw myself at her feet, and begged her to hear me.

I told her the whole of our connexion, from the very first hour that you honoured me with your notice. She heard me patiently and kindly; she raised and embraced me.

My dear child, be comforted, repose your sorrows in the bosom of your parent; this is an indiscreet connexion according to the world's judgment; but, if Mr. Bennet prefers poverty with you, to affluence with another, what right have I to refuse my consent? the heart will choose for itself; and if the attachment be founded upon virtue, it must be a crime to oppose it. I must leave it to you to choose your own lot; it is you that must abide by it.

I gave my dear mother a thousand thanks and blessings for her goodness; I told her the concern I was under for my cousin, and my wishes for her peace and happiness. My dear, we must leave this house directly; perhaps when this affair is blown over, she may wish to see me again; but you, I am afraid, she never will. I will take a proper leave of her, and if she will permit it, you shall do the same.—My mother's kindness

calmed my ruffled spirits; she went from one to the other all the day; she tried to promote a reconciliation, but my cousin would hear no reason. The next day my mother went to Mr. Styles's, a tenant of the family; she asked him to take us to lodge and board for some time.

At my mother's return, we prepared for our departure: I begged to take leave of my cousin, but she refused to see me.

I find it high time to conclude this letter. Direct to me as you will see in the cover; write to me soon; restore my peace and tranquillity, and dispose of me as you please.

MARIA HORTON."

I read this letter with great emotion, and then gave it to my father, and asked his advice how to proceed.—There is but one way, said he; write to Mrs. Horton immediately; offer this house as an asylum to her and her daughter.—You are the best of fathers, said I; and I can never express my sense of your kindness to me!—You shall give me a daughter, said he, that shall be the comfort of my old age.—I flew to my father, I embraced and thanked him, more indeed by actions than words, for my joy rose almost to rapture.—He observed me.—Harkee, young man! let me lower you a little: how are you to maintain a wife?—Dear Sir, said I, she

brings me a little fortune of her own; I shall get a double curacy; and your goodness will piece out a scanty income, till such time as I can get some preferment.—And when is that to be? said my father, smiling.

Sir, I have a promise from Mr. Lucas.—My father shook his head.—You shall marry the lady, said he, and you shall be my curate, till you can do better. You shall be all my boarders, and you must pray for my life, that you may still have a house over your head. Go, write your letters, and pursue the plan I have chalked out.—I wrote to Miss Horton in the terms of an accepted lover; and prevailed on my father to write himself to Mrs. Horton, as the invitation would come more properly from him. I told them I should only wait for their answer, and set out immediately to fetch them to my father's house.

We received answers as soon as they could possibly reach us.—Mrs. Horton thought it was better for us to wait some time, till Miss Lucas's resentment should be abated, before we married.

I was of a different opinion; that when once our marriage was celebrated, and there was no remedy, Miss Lucas would return to a right way of thinking. I wrote to Mrs. Horton, and told her she might expect to see me soon after the

the writings; and as soon as they were finished and executed, my father married me to my dear Maria, and made me the happiest of men; generous by nature, frugal by necessity, she spared from herself to relieve the wants of others. She never spent a penny idly, nor bought any thing superfluous to adorn her person; yet there was such neatness and elegance in her dress and manner, that any body would have given her credit for three times the money she expended.

To my father and her own mother, the most dutiful and tender of children; to me, a most amiable wife. I doated upon her, and yet thought I could not love her enough.

Such was—Oh rather let me bless heaven that I can say, *such is* the woman who honoured me with her hand! such is the mother I gave to my children; such are the qualities a man should seek for, in the woman he chooses for his companion through life.

I will check my pen which knows not how to stop on this subject, and only utter the final wish of my soul, which is (if God so please) that I may not survive this excellent woman.—I proceed with my history.

About three months after my marriage, I received a letter from Mr. Lucas, in which he remembered his former friendship. He said, he had a strange letter from his sister, in which she

complained, that I had behaved unhandsomely to her, and made a difference between her and her relations; desiring him not to give me the living he had promised, but keep it for one more worthy of it. He said, she had told him no particulars, and therefore he desired to hear them from me. He desired me to write to him at Montpelier, where he was at that time, and should stay some months on account of his health, which was not good enough to proceed to Italy.

I wrote an answer immediately, in which I guarded the lady's honour as carefully as my own. I told him, that I had presumed to solicit Miss Horton's hand, without consulting Miss Lucas; that she resented my behaviour; that I was actually married to his fair cousin; that I relied upon his friendship to reconcile us both to his sister, for whom I had every sentiment of esteem and respect; and hoped his return would reunite us all.

I received an answer to this letter as soon as I could expect; and also one from Mr. Bates, expressing his apprehensions for Mr. Lucas's life, and fearing a consumption.

Mr. Lucas expressed himself to the same effect, and I began ardently to wish for his return. I wrote to urge him to come back, if his health was not soon re-established. I gave him some

serious advice, and assured him of my warm affection towards him.

Mr. Bates answered this letter on his behalf; said, that he was in a place recommended for his disorder; that he would not go to Italy, unless he were quite restored; that his conduct had been prudent and regular in all respects; that he had frequently serious conferences with him; that he repented sincerely the follies and errors of his youth.

I wrote again to Mr. Bates, desiring him by all means to let Miss Lucas know the situation of her brother: and wished him to come home directly, if he was able to bear the journey. Afterwards I consulted my wife and mother, whether it would not be better to give Miss Lucas immediate notice of her brother's danger; it was thought proper to do so, but not under either of our hands.

My father used the pen and wrote as follows:

"A warm and sincere friend to Miss Lucas, thinks it is his duty to advertise her, that her brother is in a very bad state of health at Montpelier; that his malady is of the consumptive kind, and it is apprehended he is in some danger. He leaves it to Miss Lucas to make what use she thinks best of this information; but in case a dreaded event had happened, before she was prepared, he could not have forgiven himself.

PHILOCLES."

We found ourselves more easy and satisfied after we had given this information; we enquired what use was made of it; and heard that Miss Lucas was set out for the continent presently after receiving our letter.—Oh, said I, that she had not banished her friends! I would cheerfully have attended her to Montpelier, and have paid the duties of friendship to both sister and brother.

Soon after the arrival of Miss Lucas at Montpelier, Mr. Bates wrote me word of this event; he supposed from whom she received the intelligence of her brother's illness; he rejoiced that she was present, to see that all kind of attention and care was paid to her brother, of whose recovery there were but little hopes.

I wrote to Mr. Bates, and received his answers constantly, with an account of the progress of Mr. Lucas's distemper, and at last of his death. He died like a *man*, and like a *Christian*, bequeathed his whole fortune to his sister, but reminded her of his obligations to Mr. Bates and *me*.

Miss Lucas determined to bring his body home, to be interred with his ancestors. Mr. Bates attended it; he gave me notice of his arrival. I went uninvited, and attended the funeral of my friend. I set out the minute after, travelled all night, and came hastily home.

It was full two months after the funeral, that one day, as I was in my study, my wife came to me with marks of surprize in her countenance. —My dear William, said she, prepare for a surprize—Of what kind, my love, said I?—Said she, There is a chaise and six horses now entered our yard; a mourning one, with two servants in mourning; it can be but one person in the world. —Let us go, said I; let us hasten to meet her!

I took her hand, and led her out. The servant came to meet us, to tell us that a lady was come into the parlour. I hastened thither; Maria hung upon my arm. I felt somewhat confused! As soon as we entered the room, Miss Lucas ran into her cousin's arms, the tears flowed fast down her cheeks. Forgive me, Maria! my dear cousin, forgive me! said she.—Maria could not speak; she embraced her cousin, she wept, but could not presently answer her.

Miss Lucas repeated, Can you forgive me?—Forgive you! oh my cousin, my friend! I have never ceased to love you!—Then you are an angel! but you always were my superior in every thing. I have never been happy since our separation; and I come now to seek your forgiveness, that I may be at peace with myself.—Don't say so! my dear cousin! said Maria. I knew your heart could not resent always; I knew it would return to mine; I knew you better than you did

yourself.—You are too good, said Miss Lucas; but I have more pardons to ask,—turning to me.

Not one word in that style, my dear Madam!

Yes, *one word*, Sir; Was it not you that advised me of my brother's situation?—It was, Madam.—I knew it could be nobody else. Oh, Sir, you have lost a friend!—She wept.—But I will restore another to you. I have seen my faults, thank God! and I live in hopes to amend them.—I begged her to say nothing that could occasion disagreeable recollections; she became more composed. She asked for her aunt, who had been preparing to see her without emotion.

When she came to us, Miss Lucas ran and embraced her.

After our first emotions were abated, she presented each of us with a ring with her brother's hair, set round with brilliants;—"By my brother's order," said she.

She said every thing generous and kind, and seemed to enjoy this reconciliation as the first wish of her heart.

My father was surprized to see so fine a lady, and to hear her generous confession of her past faults: she said, it was the first happy hour she had enjoyed, from the day her aunt and cousin left her house.

After dinner, when the servants were withdrawn, she said, I have but one thing more to

say, my brother desired that I would give the two livings, as they should fall, to you and Mr. Bates; the option shall be yours, Sir.—I offered to speak.—I will receive no thanks, said she; I only fulfil the desire of your friend, who blessed you with his last breath.

After this she seemed to recover her spirits. She spent a week with us, and behaved with the greatest kindness and politeness to us all.

Soon after Miss Lucas returned home, she was very pressing to her aunt to come over to her: Our dear mother was unwilling to leave us; she delayed her departure till the summer. Miss Lucas continued urging her by letter, and gave such reasons as made it impossible to refuse her.

"I am besieged, my dear aunt, said she; the fortune I inherit is the occasion of much trouble to me: I am as much tormented with suitors as Penelope was of old. Mr. Withers is against me; he says it is my duty to marry, and encourages new suitors as fast as I send away the old ones.

"If my dear aunt will not come to me, I will shut up my house, go to a distant part, change my name, and conceal my fortune, that I may enjoy my own comforts, and live after my own manner."

Mrs. Horton wrote in answer, "That she was preparing to wait upon her."

Mrs. Horton and Miss Lucas wrote in turn to my wife, and informed us of every thing that passed with them.

The year following brought forward a new series of events, that ended in the accomplishment of all our wishes. The first step towards it was, that one of the livings in Miss Lucas's gift became vacant.

It was in an unpleasant situation, a lonely village, far removed from all our friends.

The other living, was Miss Lucas's own parish, which she supposed would be more desirable to myself and my wife: if I chose to wait for that, I *might depend* upon it.

I answered her letter to this effect: "That I was under the same obligation to Miss Lucas, whether I accepted or declined it; that I should refuse any preferment, however advantageous, that could interfere with the duty and affection I owed to my dear father; and that all other considerations vanished before it.

Secondly, that I had a predilection in favour of the dear village where I was born, and wherein I had spent so many happy years: that my father intended to use his interest with the patron, for the next turn of the living of S—— for me; or, that if my father's application should not succeed, I would wait in expectation of her goodness, in regard to the other living; but that,

whatever the event might be, she had bound me and mine to her, in an eternal bond of gratitude and obligation."

This letter Mrs. Horton gave to her cousin; she smiled on reading it. Tell your son, said she, that he is a *proud man*, and chooses to be obliged to any body rather than to me; but tell him also, that I will yet be *revenged on him*. Bid him apply to the patron of the living of S——, and let me know the result as soon as possible.

She said this in a manner that shewed her real intention to serve me.

My father applied directly to the patron of the living of S——; he was a worldly-minded man, who thought of nothing but to make the most of every thing. He took some weeks to consider of the proposal, and then wrote to my father, "That though his father had given away the living to him, as a proof of his friendship, there was no reason why he should do it to his son; that times were altered, expences increased, and that he could not afford to *give away* things of so much value; but, if my father would give him five hundred pounds for the next turn of the living, he might then resign it, and he would present it to his son; but otherwise it should remain as it was."

We were under some difficulty to relate this treaty to Miss Lucas. I wrote to Mrs. Horton,

told her of this treaty, and that my father had an objection to the proposal of purchasing the next turn of the living for me; that I had given it up, and had turned my wishes and expectations another way.

My father received a letter from Miss Lucas immediately on the receipt of mine, desiring him to proceed *no farther* in this business.

Generous, noble-minded woman! said my father; she will have her *revenge*, and she shall take her own way.

A few weeks after, my father received another letter from our patroness.

"The business is done, Sir; you will resign your living, and I shall present your son to it; I have purchased the advowson, and will be *patroness myself*. Tell your son I shall pay him a visit shortly, and bring his mother with me, upon condition that her daughter will not detain her, but let her return with me."

She came soon after. Miss Lucas enjoyed our satisfaction, but yet there seemed a cloud upon her brow at times. One day after dinner she spoke to us:—"I want to make known my present situation to you all, my dear friends; but for my life I cannot tell the story myself. I will give my aunt Horton leave to do it, but it must be when I am not present. I will retire to my chamber, and leave her to tell you all that I

wish you to know."—So saying, she retired; and our curiosity being strongly excited, we begged my dear mother to gratify it, which she did by relating what follows:

"I need not tell you, my dearest children, that Miss Lucas has had many offers of marriage since her brother died; she has refused them, upon a presumption that her fortune was their principal object. I need not tell you that she has a noble, frank, and generous heart; she has always said, "I would rather *confer* than *receive* an obligation; I had rather engage a man's *gratitude*, than that he should demand mine."

"After this preface, I must inform you, that about three months ago a young gentleman, whose name is Valentine Lucas, paid a visit to our friend Mr. Withers. He told him that he had been informed, that a part of the family estate was *entailed* upon the *male heir*; that he was the person that had the right to claim it; that out of respect to Miss Lucas's character, he was desirous to spare her every thing that could possibly give her uneasiness; that he would submit his claim to the arbitration of some of the most eminent men of the law, if Miss Lucas would do the same.

"Mr. Withers was extremely pleased with the young man's person and address; he enquired into his character and fortune. He heard that

he was of a small fortune, not more than three hundred a year; was bred to the law, just called to the bar, of good character and abilities, and of great expectations in his profession. He made his report to Miss Lucas, who was at first a good deal surprized and disconcerted. Mr. Withers urged her to see the gentleman, and to hear what he would say upon the subject. He brought him to pay his respects; the lady was pleased with his person and behaviour, which was exceedingly modest and respectful. Mr. Withers observed them both, and, at his return, had a long conversation with Mr. Lucas; in the course of which, he asked him whether he should not like a compromise at the lady's expence? The young gentleman urged him to explain his meaning. Why, said Mr. Withers, if I were a young man in *your* situation, I would try my *fortune* with the lady, cheat the lawyers, and share the estate with *her* only.

"Dear Sir, said Mr. Lucas, you surprize me! with my little fortune, how can I presume?

"If your fortune equalled *her's*, would you *address her*?—Sir, I would, by heaven! said he.—Very well. Will you give me leave to tell her so?—If, Sir,—if you think she will not be offended. I would not for the world that she should think me wanting in respect to her.—These sentiments

are the most likely to make you esteemed by her, Sir. I know Miss Lucas has a generous, noble heart, and I wish her to marry; I think she could not make a more proper choice.—Dear Sir, you transport me by your goodness!

"The next day Mr. Withers came and told the whole story to Miss Lucas. She was offended with him; but the good old man urged her with so much eloquence and reason on his side, that he served his client effectually, and at length she consented to receive his visits, and to hear him speak for himself.

"I seconded Mr. Withers in his remonstrances, telling her that she ought to marry.

"The gentleman came to visit her; and the oftener he came, the more merit we discovered in him: in short, he is very likely to succeed in his suit to her; and she will, I make no doubt, confirm her own happiness when she completes his. She was resolved to provide for my dear children before she gives up her power over her own fortune. She has wanted to tell you this story, but had not the courage; but now you have heard it, you will, I dare say, rather strengthen than weaken her resolution to marry."

We were overjoyed to hear of her intention, and, at her return to the company, we congratulated her on her resolution.

She received our compliments with kindness and affection; and hoped we would visit her in Staffordshire.

She asked our permission to keep my mother with her till her marriage was over.—I believe, said she, I shall keep my aunt till you come to fetch her home.

After a fortnight's stay, she returned home, and carried our mother with her, whom we cheerfully spared, in hope she would soon take up her residence with us entirely.

About a month after her return home, Miss Lucas made her lover happy. Mr. Withers was the nuptial father, and seemed as much delighted as if he had married his own daughter, for he was interested in every thing that concerned the honour and happiness of Miss Lucas.

After two months were elapsed, and my mother made no mention of returning to us, my wife wrote to urge it, being desirous that she should be with her before she should be brought-to-bed; saying, she could live without her no longer. Mrs. Lucas wrote to my wife in answer. I transcribe a part of her letter to her.

"I cannot resist your plea for your mother's return; but it disappoints my intention, which was, that you should have come to fetch her. However, if you will not grant me *this favour*, you must *another*; you must part with Mr. *Ben-*

net, and send him to conduct your mother home; I have a *reason* for this request. Mr. Lucas is very desirous of being acquainted with your husband. This man assumes the authority of an *husband*, my dear Maria; he pretends to have more generosity than myself. I shall not explain myself farther: send your husband over, we will not keep him from you long, and will return him *not worse* than he comes; oh that you would accompany him, and share the happiness of your friend!

ANNA LUCAS."

I could not avoid going, though it was with great reluctance. I left my wife; my father promised to take care of her till my return, and to advise me of her health every post.

At my arrival, I met with the most cordial reception from Mr. and Mrs. Lucas. I found him a modest, sensible, and amiable man; like minds are easily acquainted, and we soon became familiar friends. The second day after my arrival, he told me the parish where they resided had lost its rector, and offered the living to my acceptance. I answered as before, that I preferred my present residence to any other; for the same reasons as formerly, that I would not accept any farther preferment, unless I could perform the duties of it.—Why then, said Mrs. Lucas, we must give it to Mr. Bates, who at

present is in a state of banishment at D——. —But I forgot (said she, looking grave) that I am married: have I your leave, Sir, to do this? —My dear angel! said he, don't ask my leave to dispose of your own property. I adore your benevolence and generosity! seldom, very seldom, do you perform any thing that can be mended: but let me, in return, ask, if I have *your leave* to do what I proposed?—You have, Sir; "I will contend with you upon *this theme*; it is the only one, I trust, that we shall ever contend about."—He bowed gracefully to her. Then turning to me, You must do us the favour, Sir, as you don't accept this living, to accept the perpetual advowson of the living of S——, as a donation of friendship and relationship from us both.—No, Sir, said our cousin, from Mr. Lucas only; it is his own thought and his own proposal, and he shall have the whole credit of it.—I was confounded at their generosity, I offered to decline it, but they would take no denial.

Mrs. Horton and myself expressed our gratitude in the warmest language our hearts suggested. They stopped us short, saying, Our friendship was their recompence.—The next day, at their desire, I wrote to Mr. Bates to come over. I wrote also to Mr. Bilson, the curate, enquiring into the particulars of his situation,

and giving him reason to hope for better shortly. —Our generous patrons enjoyed the pure and sublime pleasure, of making three families completely happy at the same time. Though I was happy in this respected and beloved family, I grudged every day I stayed; for I longed to return to my dear Maria, who I knew reckoned the hours of my absence.

They acknowledged the justness of our plea, and excused us for this time; saying, we should make them amends in future.

Mr. Lucas said, I hope our fair cousin will bring you a son, to succeed you in your own living. I offer myself as sponsor for him, if you are not provided.—I thanked him for the honour, and gladly accepted it.—Mrs. Lucas offered to be godmother; and Mr. Withers the other godfather.—It seems, said Mrs. Horton, that you are certain of a son, but if you should be mistaken?—Then, said Mr. Withers, we will reserve ourselves for another time. We hastened home, being impatient to meet those dear and tender friends, who expected us with impatience at least equal to our own. Their joy at our return rose almost to rapture; but my dear father's looks were a great abatement to mine; he assumed a cheerful countenance, and strove to conceal the alteration from us all. He encouraged our joy; he said every thing that could

make us easy; he told me that my return had made him well, and renewed his youth: But I think, William, said he, that I cannot part with you again; for it seems as if my health, as well as happiness, depended upon you.

The tears started from my eyes. Oh that it depended upon me, said I, to prolong that life so dear to me!—I embraced him, and wept over him.—Why it does, said my dear father; I will live as long as I can for your sake; and if you did not wish it, I should not have lived so long as I have done. Come, tell us all that has happened since our separation.

I related our cousin's noble behaviour to us and to others, and communicated the happiness I felt to my hearers; and we united our blessings and prayers for our benefactors.

At length my wishes and prayers were answered; my dear Maria brought me a son within a week after my return home, to the inexpressible joy of every part of my family. My dear father was so interested in this happy event, that he was continually visiting the room, that he might see the child; several times in the day he looked at him, and seemed anxious after every thing that related to him.

My dear Maria nursed the child herself; and, happily, her health seemed to improve in the discharge of the tender office.

My dear father's decline could no longer be concealed; I saw and lamented it, without power to prevent it. I besought him to have advice from the most eminent physicians. He smiled.—Do you think, my son, they can renew my youth? I know my disorder, it is the lot of mortality; did you think I was immortal? I have lived long enough; I see my children happy; you are well provided for; I have nothing more to wish or to hope for; I am willing to depart when Heaven calls me. Your sister's husband is not a man after my own heart, but I will discharge my duty to him and her; send for them, my son; I will see them once more, and take a proper leave of them. I wrote immediately for them to come to us. Mr. Bloomfield, who had married my sister, was a wealthy farmer, a close, sordid, selfish man, who had but one thing in his head, which was accumulating riches.

He had married my sister for love, and afterwards bragged of his generosity, and even reproached her with her obligations to him. She was a quiet, harmless, inoffensive woman; she did not contend with his imperious temper, but sunk into a state of acquiescence, obeyed him implicitly, and gave up every other wish, and every other friend.

Upon this occasion he brought her to visit her father; but, instead of shewing any concern for

him, this man enquired what he had done for his daughter; said, he had heard that some good fortune had fallen to him lately, and that he had bestowed it all upon his son.

You have been misinformed, said my father; a relation of my son's wife purchased the advowson of my living for him. I did nothing more than resign the living a short time sooner than death would have taken it from me. I gave no money, I lost none, for my son would never receive any part of the income of it so long as I live. I have left my own little fortune equally for you and my son; the only distinction I have made in his favour is this: I have left him all the furniture, plate, and linen of this house, with the farming stock and utensils; and I have left him my executor, and residuary legatee, that you may not have it in your power to give him trouble. I think I have done what justice requires; my heart is easy and satisfied; and it is not in your power to disturb the peace of my mind, nor to make any alteration in it.

This son of earth would have objected to my father's disposal of his property, but it was to no purpose.

My sister showed a true filial concern and affection for her father; but was under so much restraint in her husband's presence, that she shewed little attention to any person but himself.

My dear father died without pain or regret; I never left his pillow; he expired in my arms, with his hand in mine. His last words were a blessing upon me and mine; and a pious resignation of his soul into the hands of its Creator.

In the course of the same year, Mrs. Lucas intreated my mother to come over, to be present at her delivery, and to initiate her into the mysteries of Juno Lucina.

This request could not be denied. Mrs. Horton went over, and was present at the birth of a son and heir, who gave joy to his parents, and to all the friends of the family. At the end of a month, Mrs. Lucas wrote to ask as a favour, that we would come to fetch our mother home; we went accordingly, and carried our young son with us; we rejoiced with our friends upon these additional blessings, and spent a happy month with them, during which, I did the office of a friend to Mr. Bates: I married him to Mrs. Mary Mills, who was a distant relation of our cousin Lucas, and had been the superintendant of her family ever since the death of her mother. Mr. and Mrs. Lucas made the new-married pair many presents, and procured them every thing requisite to the comfort and convenience of their situation.

We parted with great reluctance on all sides; as all of us foresaw that our families increasing,

and the duties of my situation, would render it inconvenient to visit so often in future as we had done hitherto.

We returned to our own home, and enjoyed the comforts that heaven had given us, in a constant and regular way of life, that afforded very little variety.

The following year Mr. Withers died in a good old age, beloved and regretted by all that knew him.

This year our mother declined going into Staffordshire; as she grew into years, long journies became inconvenient and fatiguing to her; and, beside, her children grew more unwilling to spare her, and she did not like to lose so much of their company.

About three years after the birth of my son, my wife brought me a daughter, whom she also nursed herself; and finding the child grow strong and healthy (more so than any she had yet borne) she suckled her longer than the usual time, because it seemed to agree with both mother and child. I mention this circumstance, because it proved of great consequence, on the interesting event which happened soon after; which introduced into our family a most dear child, and, as I hope, a future mother of it; I will therefore be particular in my narrative of that event.

It was on the 18th of October, 17—, as I was sitting in the parlour with my wife and mother; they working at the needle, I reading to them; a post-chaise stopped at our door. The servant came to us, and told us that a gentleman and lady desired to speak with me instantly. I went to the door directly; I saw there a young gentleman, whose countenance shewed marks of the utmost distress.—I asked what commands he had for me? He seized my hand, pressed it earnestly, and spoke. Dear Sir! worthy gentleman! you are a clergyman, you must have humanity. Take pity on an unfortunate pair, who are in distress of a peculiar kind! This lady, my dear wife, is in labour; she was taken ill upon the road, she cannot reach the place whither we were going, and where we were expected; it is full ten miles further; my wife has been in fits; she will expire on the road, unless your goodness will assist us. Have pity upon us, and take us under your roof, and God will reward your humanity!

The gentleman's distress touched my heart; it answered in his behalf, and dictated my reply. —I ran into the parlour.—My love, said I, here is a call upon our humanity; a most distressful situation; come and assist me to answer it.— We hastened to the chaise; the gentleman repeated the particulars of the case in the accents of nature, oppressed with grief and tenderness.

My wife desired me to assist him in bringing the lady into our house. I opened the door of the chaise; the lady was in a fit; we lifted her out, and carried her into the parlour; the servants came and offered their assistance. We tried the usual methods to recover the lady; our mother came to advise us. My wife supported the lady in her arms, and every one strove to be of service to her; the husband was in agonies of grief all this time. At length she opened her eyes; she looked round her, and then fixed them on her husband, and spoke,—My dear, am I at B——?—No, my life, said he, you are in an hospitable family, who have had the goodness to take us under their roof. We stopped at two houses before, and they refused to take us in; but we have found the good Samaritan at last. God reward him and his tender wife!—She looked up at my wife, who was bending over her.

My mother brought some wine; she made the lady take a little; the gentleman did the same. Let us, said she, carry the lady up stairs, while she is a little better.—Her husband and myself did so, but she fainted again while we were removing her. We left her in the hands of the women of our family, and fetched up stairs the trunk that contained their necessaries; the gentleman paid the post-chaise, and sent it away.

Soon after, my servant returned with the good woman; she went directly up stairs; and I took the gentleman into the parlour, and asked him to give me the particulars of his situation, which he related briefly as follows.

"I am the only son of a man of rank and fortune; my father had chosen a wife for me, but my heart refused the election of another, and would choose its own partner for life. I am privately married to that dear woman whom you have seen with me; I was obliged to conceal it from my father, and therefore I secured her an asylum at a great distance from him against her hour of trial. Unfortunately I delayed too long our journey thither, on account of some accidental hindrances; but I hoped to have been there to-night. Through that unhappy delay we are subjected to this distress, which I ardently pray may have no bad consequences."

I comforted him in the best manner I could, and put him in hope that all would end happily. While we were talking together, my mother entered the room with the midwife, and their looks boded no good ending of this business.

The good woman said,—Sir, this lady's case is past my skill, she has been too long without proper assistance; you must send for some gen-

tleman of the faculty, upon whose skill you can rely, for the lady is in very great danger.

This account threw us back into all our fears again.—I took my horse directly, and rode as upon life and death: I was so fortunate as to find the doctor at home, and brought him with me in less time than could have been expected; telling him the case by the way.

The tender heart of my dear Maria suffered greatly on this occasion; but she resolved to obey its dictates, to stay with the poor lady, and give her every comfort and assistance in her power.

When I arrived with the doctor, I carried him directly to the lady; I took the afflicted husband away, and left the doctor to the duties of his profession. In half an hour he came to us with a countenance of deep concern. Mr. Bennet, said he, you have called me to an unfortunate business. I think it my duty to tell you that the lady is in the utmost danger.

The husband threw himself in agonies at the doctor's feet; he assured him of his reliance upon him.—Save my wife, said he, and ask what you will for your reward.—Reward, Sir, answered he; I would freely give an hundred pounds to be as many miles another way; and that any other man had the office and the reward; but I will make an effort to save both the mother and

child, and will act as a man who is accountable at a higher tribunal than that of the opinion of men.—He went out of the room with tears in his eyes, and left us overwhelmed with grief and despair.

It was about two hours before we heard any thing from above; at length Mrs. Horton came into the room with her eyes swelled with weeping, and her voice faltering.—The lady is *delivered*, said she; both she and the child are *alive*, but it is very uncertain how long they will be so. The gentleman rose up; he embraced my mother, and thanked her for her goodness. God reward you, Madam! you have given me a glimpse of hope.

My Lord! says Mrs. Horton, for such I find you are, you should make us acquainted with your name and family; you have no friends that better deserve your confidence.

He told us that he was the only son of the earl of D———, and that his father knew nothing of his marriage or his journey, but thought him at his seat in Bedfordshire.—But, Madam, added he, may I not see my love?—Not at present, said she.—May I not see the doctor?—I have prevailed on him to stay till the lady is out of danger, or till—— Oh dou't, do not suppose it, said he! I cannot bear the idea: she must not, shall not die!—It is our duty, Sir, to resign

to the will of heaven. So saying, my mother retired, and left us in a state of doubt, fear, and anxiety, which yet was too soon ended. I sat performing the useless office of advising a composure, which I could not attain. After some hours spent in this manner, the doctor came to us.—Sir, said he, to Lord B——, your wife desires to see you once more; but you must be *composed*, or you will disturb her *last* moments. —He began to rave again.—This will not do, Sir; you must not see her, unless you can command yourself.—Not see her! said he; who shall hinder me!—I will, Sir, said the doctor; and so will every one in the house.—Well, but I *will* be patient as a man can be; lead me to her!— We led him up stairs, and into the room. I was a spectator of the mournful scene; my wife was supporting the dying lady, her arm was under her head, and she held my Maria's hand to her lips. Mrs. Horton held the child, for the mother to take a last look of it. The lady spoke in a low and tremulous voice. You will be the mother of my child?—I *will*, said my wife, in a faltering voice, she shall be as dear to me as my own.—Thank you, my dear friend, God bless you!—The husband ran to the bedside; he kneeled by it; he sobbed, but could not speak; he took her hand with my wife's in it; she tried to turned that way, but could not.—

She said, Farewel, my dear lord! take care of yourself. Do not grieve for me; your father, your child! live—long and happy. God bless—bless, keep you!—She fell into a fit with this exertion. We carried the distracted man out of the room, and she expired in a few minutes after. The husband was in agonies; he raved till his strength was exhausted, and then sunk into fainting fits. I begged the doctor to stay with us to take care of him.—I will bleed him, said he; I make no doubt he will soon recover; this kind of grief is not fatal; it is the *silent kind*, that preys upon the *heart*,—He bled the patient, we laid him down upon a bed; I left my servant and a neighbour's son to watch with him, with orders to call me if I was wanted. The doctor went away, and promised to call the next day; but my first care was for those dearer to me than myself. I went and fetched my wife and mother from the scene of death. I intreated them to go and take some repose; they retired together, and I threw myself into an armed chair in the same room; sleep kindly visited us all, and repaired in a degree the fatigue and vexation of the wretched night we had passed. I first awoke, stole softly out of the room, and went to visit my patient; who was somewhat more composed and rational, but had many returns of passion, which were happily allayed by *tears* which he shed plenti-

fully. I wept with him in silence; he poured forth his acknowledgments for my tender sympathy! he vowed eternal friendship to me and mine, while he should live upon earth.

I besought him to leave it to us to pay the last duties to his departed wife. I told him that my father had built a large vault for himself and family, and we would give our guest a place in it; he embraced me with tears and thanks. He took out his pocket-book, and put into my hand two bank bills of an hundred pounds each: I offered to return one of them.—Keep them, my dear friend, said he, to answer incidental expences. Alas! I hoped to make a different use of them.

I stepped out, and gave some necessary orders concerning the body; and sent for proper assistants, in order to put things in train for a decent disposal of it. My wife and mother arose, and the family began again to put on an appearance of regularity. Lord B—— refused dining with us, and kept his chamber, which I thought best for my friend's sake; but towards night, my wife had been missing some time, and, as I supposed, was attending to her children. I sought her all over the house. At last I found her in the nursery. I found her—oh divine benevolence! emanation of the Divinity! first of Christian virtues!—I found her giving her own breast to the poor little orphan child, while the tears rolled

down her cheeks in compassion for it. I kneeled involuntarily to her as to a superior being.—Oh Maria!—my angel wife! This action is worthy of thee, and few beside thee would have performed it.

My love, said she, forgive my doing it without first asking your permission! but I have promised to be a mother to this poor baby, and I mean to perform it religiously; it is high time that our daughter should be weaned; and I will preserve her diet for this child, as long as she has need of it.

Excuse you! my love, said I; I adore you for it!

I left her, to return to Lord B——.—My lord, said I, your daughter will live; we have got her a nurse,—*such a nurse*, as neither you nor I could ever have expected.—What already? said he.—I had much ado to make him understand or believe this news; but his tears and blessings spoke his gratitude for it. I consulted my wife and mother concerning the funeral; I advised Lord B—— to depart first, but he insisted upon attending it; I waved it for the present, saying, *if* you are *able*, my lord.—When he first saw my wife, he kneeled to her; called her his guardian angel! his patroness! the mother of his child! "I will find a way to show my sense of my obligations to you, Madam, and

to defray your expences for my poor infant."—On the day of the funeral, we kept in a backward room. Lord B—— attempted to visit the coffin, but was not able. I sent to a neighbour clergyman, and begged him to perform the service of the church.

I kept with Lord B——; I amused him; and the body was carried out of the house without his knowing it; he expected that I should officiate, and wondered at the delay. When all was over, I told him; he thanked me, and blessed me, but had a violent ebullition of grief and passion upon it.

The next day I took the liberty to advise Lord B—— to remove as soon as possible from the scene of his distress; he took it kindly, and prepared to do so. I offered to account to him for the money he entrusted to my care, but he refused it.—My dear Sir, said he, don't think that I mean this trifle as any return for my obligations to you. Hear me, Sir: I shall be of age in a month, and then I shall receive a legacy from an aunt; life is uncertain; I ought to do something towards providing for this poor child. I will deposit a sum in your hands for her use and benefit; the interest of it, you will accept for her board and necessaries. Don't say one word in answer; I have taken my resolution.—Sir, said I, it will be proper the child should be

baptized.—By all means, said he.—By what name would you have her be called?—By her dear mother's, Sophia Melcombe.—Then you don't choose she should be known to be your daughter?—Not at present, said he; as my marriage was not known to my father, it is better it should continue a secret for some time longer. —That shall be as you please.—After some further conference, we agreed to send to I—— for a post-chaise, and that he should depart the next day. The child was baptized; the father named it; he embraced and blessed it. We took a most affecting leave of Lord B——; he was scarcely able to speak a word. He embraced me, threw himself into the chaise, and departed in a flood of tears, with his hat pulled over his face: he waved his hand as long as he could see us, and we seemed as if we had parted with a near relation.

After some days we returned to the duties of our station and employments. The little orphan, by my wife's tender care and offices, began to thrive; and to promise to reward our humanity towards her. The pleasure all our children afforded us, amply rewarded our cares for them. About ten days after Lord B's departure, we received the following letter from him:

"Dear Sir,

"When I reflect upon the scenes lately past,

my heart is overwhelmed with grief one while, and presently after, it is raised by the most ardent gratitude; I endeavour to dwell on this last sensation, and to overcome the first.—When I think on the hospitality, generosity, sensibility, and goodness of you and your lady—you seem like pitying angels sent by heaven to save me from despair; surely there is not such another pair upon earth!—May heaven protect and reward you both here and hereafter!—But these are only words; the feelings of my heart are unutterable towards you. Friend and brother of my soul!—accept the overflowings of a heart that would, but cannot express its love and gratitude.

"I have not yet seen my father; as soon as I can do something better than talking, I will visit you; in the mean time my wishes and prayers shall be daily offered for you and your beloved family.

"I am, your brother, friend, and servant,

"B——."

About a month after, I received a second letter.

"Dear Mr. Bennet,

"I will do myself the pleasure to wait on you one day in the course of the next week. I think every day a week till I see you at S——: but,

alas! I must pass by the church, before I can have the pleasure of embracing my friend.

"B——."

Within a week after I received this letter, Lord B—— came to S——: he embraced me with tears, but they seemed to flow easy, and he soon got the better of them. The sight of his little girl gave him emotions of a joyful kind; he almost stifled her with his kisses. He called her the likeness of his departed saint; the precious relick; his only comfort! He thanked my wife in raptures of gratitude; he paid his respects to my mother, whose tenderness he had not forgotten. He remembered the servants; to whom he had omitted, in his affliction, to make acknowledgments. I told him that his Lordship's beneficence had enabled me to make the requisite acknowledgments to every person that had given their attendance in the hour of trouble; that we would now enjoy an hour of comfort together, and look forward to happier times and prospects. He agreed with me, that it was right to enjoy the blessings that remained, and suffer them to comfort us for those that were lost.

We spent a cheerful evening, and were delighted with the politeness and amiable qualities of our guest.

The next day, as we were sitting after dinner,

Lord B—— took out his pocket-book.—Suffer me, Sir, to enter upon the subject that is nearest my heart. This poor child's provision depends entirely upon me; life is uncertain; I ought to do what is in my power for her, and I cannot be easy till I have done it. I have told you that I took hold of a hint of my father, to let him believe that I had some debts of honour, in order to prevent his farther enquiry into the use I should make of my legacy. I have not told an untruth; this is a debt of *honour* in the *strictest sense.*

I shall deposit in your hands these bills for two thousand pounds, to be employed as you shall think proper.

The interest is to go for her *board* and *necessary expences*, and you must not offer to give me any account of it.

I *insist* upon it, Mr. Bennet; you will affront me, by your saying a word in reply to this my fixed resolution!

Suffer me, my Lord, to say *one word;* not to disapprove of your action, it is at once just and generous; but to give you a *bond* for your security and the child's also.

No, Sir, I will not accept it; if I should be taken away, (a case I am providing for), and this *obligation* should be found, you will be liable to *repay* it, and then I should have done *nothing.*

—Then, Sir, said I, let the bond be deposited in a *third hand*.—No, I will not do *that*. Have I not seen, have I not *felt* the effects of your good heart and principles? If I cannot trust *you*, whom can I rely on! But I know my man, and that is enough. Say no more; I know I am doing my duty, and you must take your share of the *charge* heaven has entrusted to our care. Let us say no more.

He staid ten days with us, during which time he behaved like an affectionate friend and brother to myself and family.

We had several conversations upon religious and moral subjects; and I had the satisfaction to find him well instructed in both respects. He returned in a post-chaise, as he came. I attended him to I——, spent an evening with him there, and returned home the next day.

From Lord B——'s departure, every thing in my family went on in the usual way; the children grew and improved; my son began to speak and to observe, and he afforded me a constant fund of delight and employment.

Lord B—— went to France within a month after he left us. He wrote me several letters from thence, but forbad me to answer them till he should return, when he would appoint a place for me to direct to him.

In one of them he says, "I shall not return

to England till after the 18th of October, *that day* I shall devote to *love* and *friendship*; I shall send you my meditations upon it." He was as good as his word, and sent me a sheet of paper with his recollections and remarks on the past events; they were tender, resigned, and grateful, and raised still higher my opinion of his principles. His Lordship did not return till the spring following, nor till after frequent and urgent importunities from the Earl his father, who grew impatient to conclude a treaty of marriage for him.

Soon after his arrival, Lord B—— wrote to me as follows:

"Dear Sir,

"I am at length returned to my matrimonial destiny; the noose has been preparing ever since I have been absent. I could no longer refuse the solicitations of a parent who really loves me to excess. The day after my arrival in town, he attacked me upon the subject. I told him, I was come home with a resolution to obey him, and to sacrifice my wishes to his.—No, my dear son, said he, you shall not do that; though Miss Grantham is the lady I wish you to marry, though I am in actual treaty with her guardian, nay, though I know it has been mentioned to the lady, who has consented to wait your return,

and would listen to no other proposal; notwithstanding all this, if you see any thing, upon a farther acquaintance with Miss Grantham, that gives you disgust, if you cannot overcome your dislike to her, I have still another person in view,—it is Lady Mary C——.

"I replied, that I had no particular dislike to either of the ladies; that I would see them both, and endeavour to like her whom he recommended.—Ah, that indifference! said he. But I will take such a consent as I can obtain, because it is my most ardent wish to see you married.—A few days after, the Earl carried me to an assembly where both the ladies were. Miss Grantham seemed actually confused at my approach; it was evident she had been apprized of meeting me. I paid my respects to her, but was almost in equal confusion. My father watched every motion that I made, and I behaved to his satisfaction. At my return he asked me impatiently, which of the ladies I liked best? I answered, Miss Grantham, past comparison; she has more understanding, and less pride.

"I am glad of it with all my heart, for I am sure by her looks that she likes you; she is sensible and prudent, and has a thousand fine qualities, beside a large fortune. But when will you wait on her, B——?—I answered, Whenever your Lordship pleases.—He embraced me, and

was in raptures of joy. The very next day he carried me to pay my respects to the lady; she is really a handsome, accomplished, and agreeable woman: my Lord has put every thing *in train*, and I am in the high road to matrimony. I know you will approve my resolution; my heart at times revolts against a new engagement, but reason and duty are on my father's side, and I am determined to obey him. If I can possibly get away before I am *fettered*, I will pay you a visit at S——; but I seem like an animal that is fastened to its cage, and cannot go beyond the length of my chain.

"My heart beats towards you all, and particularly to the poor little orphan; I long to see and embrace her.

"Present my affectionate regards to your wife and mother, and to the dear little ones; and believe me always

"Your affectionate friend,

"B——.

"P. S. I send you some covers, to write to me often."

In a month after I received another letter as follows:

"All is over, my friend; I am once more married; my father is in extasies of joy; my wife is pleased with me; she is really a woman

of merit, and deserves my attentions. As soon as I can break away for a week, and make a decent excuse for my absence, I will see you: till when, give me credit for the continuation of my wishes and regards to you and yours,

"B——."

We expected Lord B—— for several weeks in vain; and when we had given over all thoughts of seeing him, he dropt in upon us one day unexpectedly; but such an alteration did we perceive in him, that we were almost ready to doubt if it was the same man: he was gaily drest, and his air and manner corresponded with his clothes. However, he seemed rejoiced to see us; but yet methought there was something of dignity and distance about him; something that said, I am your superior. He asked for the *children*, without particularizing *one* from the rest. My wife ran to fetch them; she brought in the little orphan; my son and daughter came with them; she gave the child to the father's arms; he looked earnestly at it, and sighed. It has the mother's features! said he; I should know it among a thousand children.—I am glad of it, my lord, said I; it will always be a claim to your paternal affection.—Yes, past doubt, said he.—She can walk, my lord, said my wife, and begins to prattle. Come hither, my dear, and

lead her, said she, speaking to her son.—He came, and was proud to lead her along the room; he called his sister to take the other hand.

Lord B—— was delighted.—My little friend, said he to my son, which of your two companions do you love best?—Sir, said he, I love them both best.—How is that? said lord B——. Why, Sir, this is my little *sister*, and this is my little *wife*.—Lord B—— smiled: That is very well explained; do you hear him, Mr. Bennet?—My lord, said I, don't think we have taught him this; upon my word the thought is his own!—It is a happy one, said my lord: if I give my consent, I hope you will not refuse yours?—I will check him for it, my lord, in time.—Why then you are a *prouder man* than I; for upon my *honour* I mean what I say! I shall think this little girl well disposed of, if you will engraft her into your family. She owes you the duty of a child already; and, if the little man hold in the same mind, and the girl likes him, as I am sure she will, she cannot be any where so well bestowed.

If your lordship *holds* in the *same* mind, said I, we certainly can have no objection.—Then give me your hand, and it is a match. What say you, Madam?—I say as my husband does, said Mrs. Bennet; I am sure she is as dear to me as my own children.—Why then we are all of one

mind, said my lord; and I swear to you that this alliance will give me the greatest pleasure, and take much care from me. Sophia is your daughter, madam, from this day forward.

We had a good deal of pleasantry upon this subject; and I saw clearly that lord B—— was pleased to get the child off his hands. However he behaved both with kindness and politeness to us all; he offered us many presents, but we declined them all.

He spent four days with us in high spirits, and then returned home, telling me, he would always send me covers to write to him; and desiring to be informed, from time to time, of every thing interesting that should pass in my family.

From this time lord B—— began to grow slack in his correspondence with me; though he still preserved the same kindness and politeness in his manners and expressions.—"Let me know what passes *in your family* that is likely to be interesting to me. Tell me how *all your children get* forward, at your leisure."

Within a year after his marriage he wrote to me,—"Congratulate me, dear Sir, on the birth of a son and heir; it completes the happiness of my father, my wife, and myself."—Alas, poor Sophia! said my dear Maria, thou art of no consequence in the scale against *a son*; thou wilt

be forgotten by thy father; but thou wilt be still dearer to thy foster parents for this reason.

I heard nothing from lord B—— for seven months after. I then wrote to acquaint him that we intended to inoculate our children, and to ask whether he had any objection to his Sophia being of the party; his answer was;

"I leave it to you, my dear Sir, to do the same for Sophia, as for *your other children*. I cannot disapprove any thing you propose; write to me when all is over."

Towards the end of the same year he wrote again.

"I rejoice to hear that *your children are all* perfectly recovered, and in better health than before. I am very happy in my married state; my wife is a very prudent and managing woman; she takes all trouble and care from me. A second son is born to me, and I fancy myself a person of great consequence, and am every day more satisfied with my situation."

The following year my lord sent three lottery tickets—"*for your three children*, said he, to be equal sharers in each other's *good or bad fortune*. My time is so filled up, that I cannot write so often as formerly, but am always yours." —One of the tickets came up a prize of a thousand pounds, of which I advised lord B——. To which he wrote a very short billet.

judge of her improvements, and they will be of service to our child, who loves her so well, that she will endeavour to be like Sophia in every respect.

Our mother was of the same opinion; and I left it entirely to them to act as they thought proper. I sent my son to a gentleman of excellent character, not only for learning, but for the strictest attention to the *morals* and *manners* of his pupils. Sophia was sent to a school recommended by a lady in our neighbourhood, whose daughters were educated there.

We missed the children exceedingly; our daughter was for some time inconsolable, but our joy at their return made us amends for their absence. The affection between our daughter and Sophia became more observable: we knew not till this separation how much the dear child loved us all.

Her sorrow at leaving us was affecting; my wife was hurt at it.—We parted with tears on all sides, and reminded each other of the next vacation when we should meet again.

At the next Christmas, when we were all together, and rejoicing in the dear circle of domestic happiness; Sophia said, I have a request to make to my dear papa and mama, which will make me very happy if it is granted; and if refused, I shall be very miserable.—My dear

child, said my wife, what can that be? your earnestness alarms me.—The child ran and threw her arms about my wife's neck; she wept in her bosom.—Speak, my love, said she; and, if it be not very improper, it shall be granted.

It is, Madam, that you will either send my dear Anna Maria to school with me, or else let me stay at home with her; I cannot bear to leave all those I love, and to be sent among those who do not care for me, nor I for them.

I must consider of it, my dear; it is not a question to be directly answered; it is of some consequence.—Only tell me that you are not angry with me, Madam; I am afraid you are?—No, my dear Sophia, I cannot be angry at a request that shews so strongly your affection to us. I will consult Mr. Bennet and my mother, and let you know our determination; but let my dear child be assured, that her happiness is of as much consequence to us as our own; be easy, be happy, my love, or else we shall not be so.

At our next evening's conversation, this subject was discussed. I gave my consent that my daughter should return with Sophia to school: when it was declared, the dear children were equally rejoiced.

My wife ordered that Sophia should be taught French, music, drawing, and many other things that are the embellishments of the female cha-

racter, and which she thought unnecessary for the humbler situation of her own child; but the affection of these two children rendered her precaution useless, for whatever Sophia learned, she always taught to the sister of her heart.

My son likewise grew a fine youth, and was all that my heart could wish both in person and mind.

We kept up a constant correspondence with the Lucas family, and our friendship was never interrupted or abated. Mrs. Lucas brought her husband three sons, and two daughters; they lived together in the most perfect harmony; they visited us three times in the course of ten years, and we paid them two visits; we rejoiced with each other on the promising qualities of our children, not one on either side had either defect or blemish.

Lord B—— had reduced his correspondence with me to very short limits; *once* or sometimes *twice* a *year*, very short letters; and had not, for many years past, once mentioned Sophia as his *daughter*. Upon the death of the earl his father, I wrote him a long and serious letter. I remonstrated, as became my function, on the duties of the parent, and the cruelty of casting off an innocent and unoffending child: and, lest he should think I had any view to aggrandize my own family by his alliance, I told him that the

day that restored lady Sophia to her family, should put an end to my expectations on my son's behalf.

I received a short letter in answer:

"You are very serious, my dear Mr. Bennet. "I will not *just now* enter upon the *subject;* but "I will *ere long* tell you *all* that I *think* about it. "I forgive your remonstrance, it is in *character*. "I respect and love you the *more* for it. I do "not think I have done badly for my *charge*, in "having put it under your and Mrs. Bennet's care.

"I am, and ever will be, your friend, &c.

"D——."

In less than a month after this, I received the following, which was written in a hand evidently disguised:

"SIR,

"You will shortly receive a visit from Mr. Melcombe, the father of Miss Sophia Melcombe, your charge; but you are desired to know him *by no other name*, as you love him or his daughter.

"PHILOSOPHOS."

This kept us in continual expectation; we sent for the girls from school, and prepared our Sophia to see her father.

One day the following week, as we were sitting in my study, my servant came to tell me a

gentleman was at the door; but the gentleman followed him so close, that he had hardly time to announce him. I rose to meet Lord D——, who came forward and embraced me more affectionately than, I believe, I returned it; for I was not pleased with him.—Where is Mrs. Bennet! said he; where are the *children?*—In the parlour, said I; but let me speak to you first alone! Not a word will I hear, said he, till I have seen them; but don't tell me which is Sophia; let me find her out.—He went out; I followed him into the room, where my wife and children were sitting at their needle. I did not announce him; my tongue refused to favour the *deception.*—Sit still, Mrs. Bennet, said he; sit still, young ladies; I will not disturb you.—He went to each of the girls, and looked earnestly at both.—Then taking Sophia's hand, This is she? said he, looking at me.—Let nature inform you, said I? it is said, she has done *wonders* in *this way.*

I cannot be mistaken, said he; this is my child! The child fell upon her knees to him; he raised, embraced her, and took her upon his knee; he looked earnestly in her face, till the child was abashed; she hid her face, and wept.

My dear, said Mrs. Bennet, look up; it is your *father!*—Lord D——folded her in his arms, the tear started in his eyes.—My child, said he,

I *am* your *father*, I *feel* that *I am!* look at me, speak to me, I long to hear your voice.—Give her a little time, Sir, said my wife: the child is abashed. Come to me, my Sophia!—The child ran to my wife, and wept in her arms.

He then saluted my daughter, and seemed surprised at their stature and improvements.—I must be grown an old fellow, said my lord, to have such a tall daughter.—Sophia was just turned of eleven years; my child was thirteen months older, but they were nearly of the same height; my Anna was rather more plump; Sophia was slender, and finely made.

It was some time before she could take courage to speak before her father; but the first time she opened her mouth, he seemed to devour her words—"The *mother's voice* exactly, said he, it speaks to *my heart*."—I am glad of it, Sir, said I.—He smiled, It says more than all your eloquence, Sir, said he; but I shall reply to *both* at a proper time.—My dear, said he, come to me; what shall I give you? tell me if there is any thing you want or wish!—Nothing, Sir, said she; my good friends don't let me want any thing; and they grant me all my wishes.—Sweet creature! said he, your *good friends* indeed!—Speak to her in French, Sir, said Mrs. Bennet; she can answer you.—Indeed! said he; I am afraid you are at too great expence for her

education.—No, indeed, said my wife, she can very well afford it. My love, tell your papa, that if he will send you a harpsichord, *that* is the *only wish* you have not been indulged in; but tell him so in French.—She did so, and he was delighted with her: he replied in the same language, that he would send her one very soon. I was a silent spectator of this scene, and enjoyed it sincerely; she shewed her father some of her drawings, and other works.—Upon my honour! said he, she wants no accomplishments that could be given her in a higher station; she has lost no time.

I am glad, Sir, that you are pleased with what has been done for her, said I; our affection for her would be a sufficient inducement to us to do justice to her talents; she deserves it, for we never have had any occasion to *correct*, or even to *contradict* her.—But you say nothing of your own daughter, said he.—I smiled, and repeated:

> Two lovely berries growing on one stem,
> And with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
> Like to a double cherry seeming parted,
> And yet an union in partition.
>
> Shakspeare.

Charming, charming! said my Lord: sweet pair of friends!—He took out his pocket-book; he gave his daughter two bank-notes.—Now,

said he, my sweet girl, keep one of these for yourself, and give the other to your sister. You call her so, don't you?—Yes, Sir, always, said Sophia; but I do not know the value of either of these.

He opened them, and shewed her.—This is *thirty* pounds, and this is *twenty*.—Sophia ran to her companion, and gave her the thirty. My Anna made a low courtesy to my Lord, and carried it to her mother.—I hope you will take this, mamma, for I do not want it, nor know the use of it.—Nor I neither, said Sophia. Pray, mamma, take mine too.—Lovely creatures! said he; I am delighted with them both.—With your leave, Sir, said my wife, they shall both receive the money in small portions from me, I will be their steward. But, my Anna; you must not take the larger note though Sophia offers it, it is a proof that she loves you better than herself.—That I do, indeed! said Sophia, and I give it her with all my heart.—I like that spirit, said my Lord; I gave it her on purpose to see whether *self* was predominant in her; I am transported to see that it is not.

Next day, when the children were withdrawn, my Lord D—— entered upon the subject he had only hinted at before.

I am going, Mr. Bennet, to reply to your remonstrance; and to shew you that *reason* and

not *caprice* is the regulator of my *conduct*. You are a man of *sense*, of *learning*, of a *right judgment* in *most things*, but you have taken the *wrong* side of the *argument between us*. Who knows better than *you*, that neither *birth*, nor *title*, nor *riches*, are the things that constitute *happiness*? You know that it is oftener found in a *middling station*, than in those *above* or *below* it; you are yourself happy in this *station*, and have not a *wish* beyond it.

I have placed my daughter in it: she is *happy*, she *tells me so*, and yet you *want me* to take *her out of it*. Is this *judging right*? Suppose I were to take her from *you*, who love her so well; and place her under the *care* and *authority* of a *mother-in-law*, who has *four children* of her *own*; do you think it would *promote* her *happiness*? Might it not destroy her *peace*, and *mine* too? beside a thousand petty distresses that attend on *pride* and *parade*, which this *peaceful happy village* is free from. Taking *these* and many *other* circumstances together, my heart acquits me of either *want* of *care* or *affection* for my *child*; and tells me I have provided in the *best manner* for her *happiness*. Now, Sir, I have answered your remonstrance fully, I believe!

I smiled, shook my head, and after a short pause, said—If I remain *silent*, your Lordship will think I am *convinced* by your *argument*; I

must therefore *reply* to it. There is no argument, however *specious* and *plausible*, that can *supersede* the *eternal laws of nature* and of *reason*. They ordain, that a *father* should take upon himself the care, the education, the *protection* of his *child*. If a man were at liberty to *accept* or to *transfer* any of the *great duties* of *life to another person*, he would be contented to perform most of them by *proxy*.

Your child might have fallen into base and sordid hands, that would have devoured her *property*, insulted her *person*, and depressed the *noble faculties* of her mind. This will not therefore acquit you of the *duties* of a *father*. You put me in mind of those parents among the Greeks, who *exposed* those children whom they did not choose to bring up and provide for; with this *difference, however*, that *their law* allowed of such a practice, but our *divine law forbids it*, even if the *heart* should give a *dispensation* for it.

My Lord bent his brow.—Sir, said he, you are very severe upon me.—Truth, said I, appears to be *severe* to those who *resist or oppose her* dictates.—Mr. Bennet, said he, these are liberties that you are not *entitled* to take with *me*.—I think otherwise, my Lord, that both *truth* and *justice* give me a *title* to use them upon this *occasion*; to say nothing of the *duties* of my *function*.

—My Lord rose up in anger: he walked out of the room, and into the garden.

I am afraid, said my wife, that you have offended him.—Perhaps so, said I, but I am performing a duty that I am called to.—But for the dear child's sake! said she.—Do not be frightened, my love; my Lord is a man of reason, he will recollect himself.

Let me send Sophia to him, she will soften him more than all your reasoning.—That is right, said I; women know best where their *strength* lies.—And when to use it *properly*.—I hope such women as *you*, my dear; but send for Sophia.—She did so.—Sophia, said I, I have offended your father, he is walking in the garden: go to him, my child; ask him to walk in; tell him that I have finished all that I had to say to him, and shall never more speak on *the subject*, unless he *begins it*. Can you remember, love?—She repeated what I had said.—She was gone half an hour, and returned with her father; the traces of displeasure were still upon his brow. He desired the child to leave us for a few minutes.—Sir, said he, I have only *one thing* more to say; if you wish to be released from the *care* of the *child*, I will take her from *you*; and I shall find some *other* place to put her in, for I shall not take her to my *own house*.

Oh not for the *world!* said Mrs. Bennet, I

could not *bear* to *part* with my *Sophia*.—Nor would I to any man living, but to her father; said I, but if that cannot be, I will supply his place to her.—I never wished it otherwise, said my Lord. You, Madam, have a right to her, in preference to every body; but it seemed to me, that your husband wished to be rid of her.—No, my lord, said she, he *did not*, *could not*, wish it; let me be the *mediator*. Mr. Bennet has done what he thinks his *duty*; but as he cannot obtain his wishes, he will do what is the *next best* for the *child*; he loves the child as well as *either of us do*.—And I will love her *more than ever*, said I, if her father will allow me to do so.—Mrs. Bennet went to Lord D——; she took his hand—Will you *permit me*, my Lord?—Dispose of it as you please, most amiable of women!—My dear *husband*, said she.—I advanced, and gave my hand; she joined them.—Let this be the last debate on this tender subject, said she.—Be it so, said my Lord. We sat down, the children were called in; and thus ended the interesting subject.

After dinner my Lord said,—I intended to have left you to-day, but I will stay another night for your sake, Madam, to convince you that all is forgotten on my part; honour me with your good *opinion*, and I will *endeavour* to deserve it.—On the morrow he departed: his

took a most affectionate leave of his daughter, who did not seem so much affected as himself; a very polite one of me and the rest of my family. I was now fully convinced that Sophia would never be publicly acknowledged for his daughter.

From this time my Lord wrote but once a year. He sent an harpsichord to Sophia according to promise, and advised her of it by a letter without any *signature*. He made her no more presents afterwards, nor has since visited us, or shewn any desire to see or converse with his daughter; but is reckoned a good husband and father to his second family, to whom all his cares and attentions are devoted.

The following year was distinguished by two remarkable events in my family; the first was the death of Mrs. Horton. I felt her loss very much, and my wife still more. I was obliged to use every argument that religion and philosophy could suggest, to abate the excess of her grief. The children succeeded better; they *diverted* it. Grief is more easily *amused* than *reasoned* away. She seemed fonder than ever of her two daughters. I told her that heaven had most graciously ordained, that the *rising generation* should supply to us the loss of the *foregoing* one.

Time, *reason*, and *our childrens company*, took off by degrees the edge of our grief, and restored our relish for society. We kept up a friendly

intercourse with most of the families in our own and the next parish, but had no very intimate friendship with any but our cousin Lucas's family.

The second interesting event of this year was, my sending my son to Cambridge. He went just before, to visit Mr. and Mrs. Lucas at their desire; and their eldest son went the year after, as a Commoner to the same College.

My wife took the two girls from school the same year, and they became her inseparable companions.

We used to long for the return of my son from college, his presence completed our happiness; but in his absence he wrote constantly, and told us every thing that happened to him.

I demanded of him an account of all those young men with whom he had acquaintance. He used to describe them to me, and I was always watchful, for my son's sake, lest he should be led by improper company into errors in conduct.

He wrote me word, that young Lucas was of an high, ungovernable spirit; that he was not beloved by many; that he kept up an appearance of civility to him, on account of the relationship between their parents; but that he expected so much homage and attention, that, if it was not out of respect to his parents, he should never go into his company.

The year following he wrote,—"I have made a new acquaintance, and, if my father will allow it, a friend, his name Gerard Selby, a gentleman of good birth, virtuous manners, and pretty fortune. He is two years above my standing, and knows much more of the world than I do; and he is so kind as to give me advice in many things that I was ignorant how to act in. I have been obliged to him upon many occasions. I ask it as a favour to *me*, Sir, that you will permit me to invite Mr. Selby to come with me at my next vacation; and then you will see and judge, whether my heart has made a worthy election of a friend.

My best wishes and most affectionate regards attend my mother and the dear girls; and, to my father, my heart's duty and affections.

V. Bennet."

I had the happiness of hearing from my friends at Cambridge, that my son's behaviour and character were unexceptionable. I likewise heard an excellent character of young Selby; and I desired my son to invite him to visit us, in my name as well as his own.

The young men came according to invitation, and their company made a considerable addition to the happiness of our little circle. Myself, my wife, and the two dear girls, endeavoured to make the visit as agreeable as possible.

We sometimes read to the ladies, and at others conversed with them. We found young Selby as amiable as his friend had represented him: the youth was an adept in music, he played on the violin; Miss Melcombe played on the harpsichord; both she and my Anna-Maria sung very agreeably. In the mornings they walked, and sometimes the girls with them; who now began to expect and receive marks of attention, from the youth of the other sex. In short, every hour was filled up delightfully, and the time passed away too fast for us.

My wife and I began to observe the behaviour of the young girls, and also of our son. I asked her opinion, whether she thought that Valentine paid any particular attention to Miss Melcombe? —I cannot say he does at present, said she; you know I have never *spoken out* concerning our wishes, but only by very distant hints. I think it better to wait till his inclination unfolds itself, and then to give him hopes of succeeding by degrees; I would not have him be too secure.— All that I fear, said I, is, lest either of them should incline another way; and I am actually afraid of this young Selby, who is very amiable. —I think, said my wife, it would not be amiss to *insinuate* a hint of that kind to Valentine, and see what use he will make of it; but it must be done with the utmost delicacy.—I leave it

to you, my love, said I; only let me know the result.

A few days after, I asked my wife whether she had sounded her son on the interesting subject.—I have, said she; but he seems rather to avoid it. I told him, that his friend was a *dangerous* man to bring among young women. Suppose, said I, he should conceive a passion for *either* of your *sisters*, or *either* of *them* for *him*? We might be thought to have *interested* views, as the young man's fortune is superior to ours.—Don't be afraid, Madam, said he; Selby is a man of honour, and will behave as such in all respects.—You seem very indifferent about it, Valentine, said I.—Perhaps I am not, said he.—*Perhaps*, said I, you may wish him to like one of them?—Why not, Madam? said he.—It is a mother's part, said I, to guard all points, and to look to all contingencies.—Nobody can doubt your prudence, Madam; but once again, you have nothing to fear.—You are very reserved to your mother, Valentine.—Excuse me this time, Madam; the next visit we make here, I will be more explicit.—Perhaps it were better you were so now, said I.—Excuse me, my dear mother, my friend's secrets are not *mine*.—That is true, said I; and pray remember that my precautions are *sacred* also; a mother fears everything for the children of her heart.

They are sacred with me, Madam, and ever shall be.—And so ended our conversation, from which I can gather nothing decisive.

During this visit, I observed that young Selby paid great attention to Mrs. Bennet, more indeed than to the girls; he seemed perfectly sensible of her merit upon all occasions. Once he said, that the greatest happiness of a man's life, was to have a woman of merit for his wife.—You, Sir, are a happy man in this, and indeed in all other respects.

When the time came for the young men to return to college, we parted with them with equal reluctance on all sides. After they were gone, we talked over every past scene of happiness, and often sighed over the recollections.

At the next excursion from college, Mr. Selby urged my son to visit his uncle with him.—It is a visit of *duty*, said he; and when it is discharged, I will make you and myself *amends* by a more agreeable one to the dear village of S——. Mr. Selby's uncle was also his guardian; he was more than of *age*, but his uncle had not yet given up his *trust*, nor settled his *account*. Young Selby went with a resolution to demand *both*. The old man had two daughters; he was desirous that his nephew should marry one of them.

In the course of this disagreeable visit, Mr. Selby's uncle let him know, that he was not in-

clined to *settle accounts* with him, until he was *assured* that he would marry one of his daughters.

Mr. Selby, finding himself *pressed*, spoke *plainly* his refusal—I am sorry, said he, to be obliged to expose the *character* and *principles* of my mother's brother, but you have made it *necessary*. Know, Sir, that I will throw off the *fetters* of my *childhood;* and that I will not *put on* the *fetters* of *matrimony*, but at my own *time*, and by my own *choice*, which, I assure you, *will not* fall upon *either* of your daughters. So saying, he went into the stable, and ordered the horses to be got ready; he then acquainted his friend with all that had passed, and told him his resolution to go away directly. The old man endeavoured to detain them; but they took a civil leave of the ladies, and rode away directly.

Selby was continually making comparisons between this visit, and that to us.

Mr. Selby, soon after his return, employed a gentleman, eminent in the law, to bring his uncle to account, when it appeared that he had embezzled the greatest part of his income during his minority. This was what he expected; but he determined not to expose his uncle to public shame and punishment. He therefore offered, if he would *only* account for the *last year*, that he might not begin the world without current cash, he would give him a discharge for

the rest. The estate was between four and five hundred a year; his uncle could not have spent *more* than *an hundred* a year for him while at school, and he had been allowed *two hundred* since he had been at *college;* in a minority of *seven years*, the sum due was *considerable;* but this good young man cheerfully gave a discharge for it, rather than prosecute his mother's brother. After this affair was finally settled, Selby was impatient to come with my son to S——. The young men's joy sparkled in their eyes when they entered my house; young Selby rushed into my arms, as a *son* would to the most tender *father*.

I swear to you, my dear Sir, said he, that I have not known so happy a moment as this, since I was last in this house. My son succeeded him, while Selby saluted the ladies, which he did in raptures of joy. Valentine seemed equally happy, and the girls appeared to make no difference between them. I determined within *myself*, to know both *their hearts* before they returned to Cambridge. Their behaviour was easy, frank, and affectionate to every person in the family; Selby had most vivacity; Valentine's characteristic was a sweet placidness of temper, which nothing could discompose; with the greatest delicacy of manners. My daughter was of a sprightly turn, and used to *enliven* our conversa-

tions; Sophia Melcombe was more serious. My *heart felt* the merits of them *all;* and enjoyed the dear little social circle, round my table, with more inward satisfaction, than external expression; and my dearest partner's joy rose to her intelligent eyes, and often overflowed them. Selby grew as dear to us as any of the rest, and shewed us the same marks of affection.

I had consulted my wife, and we both agreed that Sophia should be told every circumstance of her birth and situation. Her father had not forbid it, *because* he did not *think* of it; otherwise he certainly *would*, as it was a part of his *plan*. She shed many tears at the relation; she thanked God for having given her such parents, in lieu of him who refused to own her. At the same time, my wife told her there *was* a *part* of her *father's plan*, that she had not yet *disclosed;* and that she would wait till the *time* was *ripe for it*.—Sophia blushed; she bowed to her, and said, I rely upon you, Madam, entirely, and am at your disposal. This looked as if she suspected the treaty of marriage. My wife said no more at that time. About a week after our scholars made their second visit, as I was sitting in my study, young Selby tapped at the door.—Come in, said I!—He did so—Do I interrupt you, Sir?—Not at all, said I; sit down, Sir, I am glad of your company.—He seemed to have

something of importance to communicate. He blushed, hesitated, and looked confused. To relieve him, I began to talk of books, and to lead him into conversation. He collected himself, and turned the discourse on his own affairs. Again I turned the discourse on other subjects. He soon returned to his own situation. I then applauded his behaviour to his uncle, and said, that every thing I had seen or heard of him had *increased* my *esteem* for him.

Ah, Sir, said he, I do indeed aspire to your friendship; but this is not *all*. I expect from you the *completion* of my earthly happiness.—From me; said I; explain yourself!—I—I—I—wish to be one of your children, Sir; to call you my father, and Mrs. Bennet my mother. In short, Sir, I wish to obtain *your* favour, and that of *your daughter*.—*Which* of my daughters? said I, smiling.—Oh, Sir, you cannot surely doubt! Is not one of them *engaged* already?

How do you know *that*? said I.—There is but *one way*, Sir; your son *warned* me before I entered the house.—Indeed! said I.—But, Sir, it was a needless precaution; from the first week I was acquainted with Miss Bennet, my heart had made its *election*. I was not then of age, nor yet sufficiently acquainted with my own circumstances; but the moment I *could come* to an explanation *with you*, Sir, I resolved to do it.

I could not be easy till I had opened my heart to you, and I trust in your goodness to treat it kindly and properly.

My good young man! said I, you are very young to think on marriage, and my daughter is a mere child. I do not mean to marry at present, Sir; but, for fear that any one should *interfere* between *myself* and my *happiness*, I thought I *could* not mention it *too soon*.

Your fortune is too much above ours; my daughter will not have more than a thousand pounds; which is exactly what her mother brought me.—He looked displeased.

Sir, said he, would *fortune* have made any difference, in your *choice* of that excellent woman?—I smiled. I have *some reasons*, Sir, to think it *would not*, said I.—Then do me the *justice* to think I have the *same sentiments*, and the *same feelings*.—Excuse me, dear Mr. Selby; I am apprehensive that the world will think the advantages *too great on our side*, in case this alliance should ever take place.—The *world* shall not choose my *wife*, Sir; and I am known to have *too much spirit* to have one *imposed* on me.—My daughter is but just seventeen, said I; it is too early for her to marry, and I think for you too.—I agree to that, Sir; I would therefore make my court to Miss Bennet, rather by silent assiduities, than by words.—I smiled, That is the

same thing, Mr. Selby; *lovers* can converse by *intuition*.—He smiled; I believe that may be, Sir; but I would not attempt it without your permission.—My dear youth, I am convinced of your *honour*, and of your *merit* in every respect. I am only afraid of your making an *engagement*, of which you might hereafter *repent*.—That is impossible, said he. But, Sir, hear my reasons for wishing to do so. A young man of good principles, whose affections are engaged, will say to himself, when under a *temptation*, how dare I do *thus*, or *thus*, when I am engaged to a woman of virtue, whose judgment must condemn it! Her idea will be like a guardian angel, constantly attending me, and leading me to deserve the crown of my felicity.—My dear young man, I am charmed with your virtue and good sense, and am proud of such a conquest for my daughter. Let me, however, consult my wife; I do nothing without her concurrence.—I leave the decision of my fate in her hands and yours, Sir; dispose of me as you think proper. Make me *your son*, at your own *time*, and in your own *manner*, and I cannot but be *happy*.—Upon this he rose up, bowed gracefully, and retired.

I was impatient to tell my wife of this explanation. She was overjoyed at it.—We both agreed, that *some years hence* it would be the most desirable alliance in the world.

We were both highly pleased at our son's *prudence* in warning Mr. Selby. Some time after, as my son was speaking to me upon the subject of Mr. Selby's alliance, and expressing the pleasure he took in the prospect of Selby's being united to our family by every tye of love and friendship; I asked him smiling, if he had yet discovered that he had a *heart*.—He blushed, and smiled.—Seeing a volume of Corneille's works before me, he turned to the *Cid*, and pointed to Rodrigo's answer to his father, *Tout autre que mon Pere!*—Very applicable, young man, said I; but how came you so well acquainted with Corneille?—I will tell you, said he, Sir; Selby understands the modern languages, and he is my tutor in them. I am a better *Grecian* than he, and sometimes he reads the *old Greek authors* with me; and thus we assist each other.—These are the mutual advantages of virtuous friendship, said I; and I am the happiest of fathers.

Another day, as Mr. Selby and I were speaking of the French writers, he mentioned the two dramatic pieces, *le Fils Naturel*, and *le Pere de famille*. He entered into a discussion of their beauties and defects.—In the first of these comedies, the writer supposes the principal incidents in a family history to be woven into a dramatic piece; and, by order of the father of

it, this piece to be represented *annually*, in order to preserve the remembrance of the most interesting events. Nay, he orders this custom to be continued after his death, and an old gentleman his friend to supply the place in his exhibition. It is really *surprizing* to observe, how very naturally every circumstance is described and represented.

According to your system, said I, *every family* might furnish a dramatic entertainment out of the most *interesting events* that have happened in it.—I think, said Mrs. Bennet, that *ours* would afford a *good subject*, or perhaps *two*. This thought amused us, and we pursued it the whole evening.

To be rather more serious, said Mr. Selby, I *really think*, that if *every* father of a family would write down the principal events in it, it would be of use to his posterity, and it would be a means to excite his children to good and laudable actions, in order to be well spoken of in the family history.

You almost persuade me, said I, to *write my own*.—I wish most ardently that *you would*, said Mrs. Bennet.—My son and daughters, and Mr. Selby, all joined to persuade me to *undertake* it; and here, my dear children, is the *origin* of my present *employment*.

After a month spent thus happily, we seemed more unwilling than ever to part with our friends. I was obliged to use many arguments, to make us look forward to the time of meeting again, in order to support the separation. Among others, I told them that I should renew the pleasures I had enjoyed, by writing them down; and they would be *repeated* to the *ladies*, when I should *read* the story to *them*.

The young men were delighted with the design. —Let us take care, said Valentine, so to conduct ourselves, that we may make a good appearance in the *History*.—I depend upon you *both*, said I, to furnish me with *subjects* for the *continuation* of it.

We received their adieu; and the same day I began to write my *family history*, which I design to bring up to this period; and to wait the decision of *some important events*, before I proceed any *further*. I am at this *instant* one of the *happiest* of *mankind*, in my present blessings and future prospects; which while I enjoy, I lift my heart in ardent gratitude and awful reverence to the Supreme Fountain of all my happiness; beseeching him that I may never be so absorbed in earthly pursuits, as to lose sight of the Divine Bounty from whence I receive them! All the good things that are distributed over the face of

this earthly globe, are but as so many *rivulets* flowing from the inexhaustible *ocean*, of the *power*, the *wisdom*, and the *goodness* of God.

CONTINUATION OF THE FAMILY HISTORY.

March 15, 177—

NEVER, oh never, let mortal man boast of his happiness on this side of the grave! For vain, fleeting, and transitory is the state of human felicity! Let him who reads these sheets, be warned of this truth; and, having heard of my joys, let him listen to my sorrows.

Yesterday, my darling, the son of my heart's wishes, was brought home in a state between life and death. He, and his friend and brother, Gerard Selby, crossed a water swoln with late rains; they were carried down the stream some way; Selby's horse swam; his servant turned back, and called for assistance; but my son's horse plunged, and was carried into a current. When Valentine saw the danger, he threw himself off, and endeavoured to swim to land; but his strength failed, and he sunk once. At this instant Selby's servant came with several assistants; they got a boat that was fastened hard by, and came directly to the place: my son rose, and Selby's servant seized his hand, the

rest took hold of his clothes; they drew him into the boat, and brought him over to the other side, where Selby was already safely landed, and standing in agonies, waiting their arrival. My son was then hardly sensible of his situation; they carried him to the first house at hand, and used all possibly means for his recovery. As soon as he could speak, he begged to be carried home immediately. Their clothes were to come after them by the waggon from Cambridge to I——, and they had no change of apparel; the cottagers could not furnish them. Mr. Selby sent his servant forward for a post-chaise; in the mean time they took off my son's clothes, and dried them as well as they could. The servant had a wallet with two shirts in it, which enabled them to change their linen.

The servant returned with the post-chaise as soon as possible. The gentlemen got into it, and the servant rode his master's horse; in this manner they came forward to S——; the servant came first, and prepared us to expect some fatal accident. In a moment our joy was changed to the most bitter grief. The young men made the best of it, and assured us all was well; but my son was so ill, that I thought proper to send to I—— for a physician. He ordered him proper medicines, and I sat up with him myself. He had very disturbed rest, and

was feverish all night. To-day he is something better, and my hopes are above my fears.

Oh, gracious Heaven, spare my son! or take my life instead of his; for in his, are included mine and his mother's!

March 16. A dreadful night we have past; my son's fever run very high; a strong delirium. Selby sat up with him. My heart is overwhelmed with grief and apprehension. My dear wife preserves her fortitude of mind; she comforts me; she looks cheerful. The girls are drowned in tears. I can write no more.

March 17. A better night; quiet rest several hours.

My family are assembled at breakfast.—Oh gracious Heaven, let me not presume! let me not despair!

March 18. God be praised! my dear son is out of danger, if there be no relapse; the doctor pronounces it so.

Let us return thanks to the Father of mercies!

March 19. We are all joy and gratitude. We cannot speak to each other without tears of joy. My son lives; he comforts his parents; he thanks his friends.

We have all been assembled in his room. We have paid our united thanks and praises to heaven.

March 20. This day our hopes are confirmed;

my son is easy and cheerful; he has said a thousand tender and obliging things to every one of his friends. His heart is affected at our tender grief and solicitude for his recovery. Selby has resumed his cheerfulness; he begins to be pleasant with us; he has spoken to *his* Anna upon a *tender subject*; he calls Valentine brother, and Mrs. Bennet his *mother*.

This day, as the two lovely girls approached my son's bed, he held out a hand to each of them. He begged his sister to be grateful to his dear Selby, for his kindness to him.

He then let go her hand, and took Sophia's in both his own. He looked earnestly in her face, and said,—If I had died, you would have lost a *brother*; but if I *live*, you will find in me a *lover*, *ardent* and *sincere*. Henceforward you must give me hope that I shall live for *you*, or else I shall live to be *unhappy*. So saying, he kissed her hand, and drew her to the chair by his bed-side. Sophia blushed deeply; the tears stood in her eyes. She sat down, covered her face with her handkerchief, and was silent.

Selby said,—My dear friends, I beseech you to let your love scenes, be in the *comic* style! No more *tragedy*, for heaven's sake! After this, our conversation took a more cheerful turn, and we spent the remainder of the day as happily as we had done the former vacations.

March 21. My son came down stairs. He assumed an air of cheerfulness, and even vivacity; but his pale cheeks too plainly shewed how much he had suffered, and he was very weak. However we all strove to be cheerful, and to encourage our hopes and wishes.

March 22. We received visits of friendship and congratulation on my son's recovery; and the following day we accompanied him on an airing. He was apparently better, and very lively.

March 25. My son is perfectly recovered, but he looks pale and wan: he says he is quite well. Heaven be praised!

April 20. A month is passed since the dreadful accident. All is well, and my young men are preparing to return to college. Valentine will take his degree, and Selby will be ordained, before they return to us again. The girls are as lively as birds, and we are determined not to show any signs of sadness at their departure.

April 26. The dear youths are gone. We are all very low and dejected; we assume airs of *bravery*, but they will not support us. The girls affect reserve and distance; but I see and feel with joy, that their hearts are *united*.

God preserve my dear children! And all things of worldly concern will be as nothing to me in the balance!

May 1. Letters from our dear young men. Valentine's was addressed to me; Selby's to my wife. Both speak of their journey by short stages, to favour Valentine's tender health.

Selby's letter requests the favour of corresponding with my wife, and *through her* with his *mistress*.

My wife permits her daughters to write to her sons. The dear girls are rather distressed how to address them. My Anna says she will mortify their vanity, lest they should be too secure.

For want of other materials, I will transcribe the young women's letters.

"Sirs,

"As you each thought proper to address your letter to both my *sister* and *self*, and from *your friend* as well as *yourself*, I shall reply to *both*, and perhaps for *both* of *us*.

So you think yourselves quite *secure* of us; and already begin to treat us as your *subjects*? Now it is my opinion that our *history* will be very dull and tiresome, unless some *difficulties* are thrown in the way, to excite your spirits, and enliven your imagination. I think you ought to have *rivals* to *contend with*, and perils to encounter; and I would not have you be too certain that you *will not*.

Last Sunday Mr. J. Rowland, a bachelor in

our village, not above *five* and *forty*, appeared at church in a *new* suit of light-green clothes; he made me a very significant *bow*, and I am told he intends to offer me his *person* and *fortune*. Look to it, Selby! you do not know what allurements may be in them.

Nay, *other folks* have their *admirers* and their *bows* as well as *I*. And, once again, do not be too secure of us. You took us at a *disadvantage* in an *hour* of *grief* and *compassion*; but now that we have recovered our spirits, we do not intend to be so easily won. I leave it to Sophia to say what she pleases; she is a gentle soul, and loves to give *pleasure* rather than *pain:* I think there ought to be a due *proportion* of *both*.—Tell us that you are both well and happy, and we will keep up the ball with you; but don't *deceive* us, in order to *make us* pity *you:* if you do, expect *reprisals* from

A. M. Bennet."

"Gentlemen,

"I conform to my sister Anna's address, and will say a few words to you both. She is a dear saucy girl; but threatens more than she means to execute. I dare say your knowledge of *her* and of *yourselves*, will enable you to support her resentment.

I am much obliged for the books you sent me;

but I think the lady is an outrageous *coquet*. I tell my Anna that if she had been introduced into the great world, she would have *resembled Marianne*, in more than *one respect*. She threatens *revenge* for the *sarcasm*, as she calls it.

I am very much concerned, that M. Marivaux did not live to finish it, and that no writer of equal merit has since attempted it.

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet write; so I leave family subjects to them.

I earnestly wish to hear that you are in perfect health, and that you think of your *friends here*, as often as they *do of you*.

SOPHIA MELCOMBE."

May 20. A letter from *Mr. Melcombe*, as he chooses to be called, enquiring after my family: whether my children are not yet *marriageable*, and whether I mean to fulfil my *engagement*.

May 24. I have answered this letter; have claimed the *agreement*; have acquainted him with the late accident; with my daughter's engagement to Mr. Selby, and with the present state of my family.

June 15. A letter from Mr. Lucas, with a desire to know *my son's* opinion of *his son's* character and behaviour at Cambridge; having heard complaints of his proud and arrogant be-

haviour there. In my answer, I begged to be excused giving particulars, as from my son's *information*; but in general, that I believe he is not *misinformed*.

June 22. My wife came to me in my study; she enquired after my health and spirits; she talked upon *serious* subjects, particularly upon resignation to the divine will.—Suppose, said she, your son were taken from you by a *sudden stroke*, or by a *lingering sickness*; *which* would be the most *supportable*?—My heart sunk within me. I fear, I fear! said I, you have some bad news to communicate; is my son *dangerously ill*?—I hope not, said she; but you ought to arm yourself with resolution.—Have you heard any thing *particular*, said I? I am sure, my love, this *warning* is not for *nothing*?—She drew two letters out of her pocket.—Let us read them together, said she; perhaps my fears may have magnified the danger.—I read them; and then threw them between these leaves. Alas—I have not spirits to transcribe them.

I will pray for patience and resignation; and submit to the disposal of Providence in all things.

TO MRS. BENNET.

"I CANNOT prevail upon myself to be silent any longer, on a subject that gives me infinite

concern, though I know I shall communicate at least an equal *share* of it; but I dread the effects of a *surprize*. My dear friend and brother Valentine, is in a very bad state of health, and has many symptoms of the *consumptive* kind. I have had the best advice for him; I have made him observe the regimen prescribed by Dr. H———. He rides out every day, he drinks asses milk, he takes every medicine that is ordered; but, alas, I don't see much amendment. I beg of you, Madam, to inform Mr. Bennet of these particulars, in the way that you think will be least alarming to him. I know your prudence and affection; I trust in your piety and fortitude. I wait your orders; and, upon the first summons, I will bring my patient home, if you think his presence will give satisfaction to you or his father. I devote myself wholly to your service, and earnestly beg that you will look upon me as your son and servant,

G. Selby."

TO MISS BENNET.

"With what transport could I answer my dear Anna Maria's sprightly letter, if my heart were at ease!

"Alas, beloved of my soul! there is no occasion to *seek* for *perils* to *encounter*, for *difficulties* to *overcome*; when we reflect on the *uncertain*

tenure upon which poor mortals hold their earthly *happiness*. Even at this *moment*, I perceive the approach of *trouble* and affliction; in which I fear *distant*, as well as *present*, evils.—Arm yourself, my dearest, with Christian philosophy, to withstand the approaching trial.—*Your* brother and *mine* is, I fear, in a *declining way*.—You will be called upon to be the support and comfort of your *father*, *mother*, *sister*, and *lover*. I will be your associate in every act of piety and affection; and, by *sharing* this burthen, endeavour to *lighten* it to you all.

"Let me ask your advice in a point of *importance*. Do you think it will be less *distressing* to your revered parents, to *see* your brother, or to *hear* of *him*? I am yours and theirs entirely; let me know their pleasure, and I will immediately obey it. If I can perceive any favourable symptoms, I will instantly inform you of it; but the disorder is *evidently* upon his *lungs*, and I fear is the *consequence* of the late unfortunate *accident*; and he is emaciated to a great degree in a short time. Perhaps my *love* may increase my *fears* above the *danger*; but I dare not attempt to *conceal* or *extenuate* them, to any part of your family. Favour me with an answer as soon as possible; tell me your parents determination, and I will hold myself in readiness to obey their summons, if they desire, as I

suppose they will, *to see their dear Valentines*; otherwise I will here perform every duty of love and friendship, for I am *theirs* and *yours* while I have life.

G. Selby."

June 30. I have written to Selby, desiring him to bring my son to my arms with all convenient speed, that I may see him as long as heaven permits me to enjoy that happiness.

July 9. I am now preparing to meet my trial; I expect my sons every hour. I will pray for composure and fortitude.

July 12. I have seen my son and have read his sentence in his pallid countenance and emaciated body. All my family are overwhelmed with grief; yet every one strives to conceal their portion, lest they should increase that of the rest. What a scene of tender grief, and speaking silence!

The dearest of women suppresses her emotions, and employs every art of soothing tenderness to comfort her unhappy husband; she looks and acts like a superior being.

Excellent woman!—I will strive to imitate thee; and to take and give comfort, to all those who love me.

July 20.—The greatest loss a human creature can sustain, is that of a promising child. When

a parent dies, the child is comforted, because it is according to the order of nature; but when the child dies before the parent, the order of nature seems to be reversed. It is a great trial; but how can any *transitory* grief, hurt a being assured of immortality?

July 27.—There are no hopes of my son's recovery; he knows his situation; he has performed all those acts which our religion enjoins; he has taken the most affecting farewel of every one of his friends.—He said to Sophia, "May you, my beloved and contracted bride, meet with a husband every way my superior. I always had a kind of *presentiment* that we should *never* be *united*, and for this reason I *restrained* myself in my *behaviour* towards you; I rejoice that I did so; and hope it will lessen your regret for me. All of you join in comforting my father. Remember, my dear parents, that this is only a temporary separation. I *hope*—I *believe*—I am *certain* we shall meet again!"

I treasure up every word that falls from the lips of my angelic son.—Alas! I know not how soon——

August 1.—"The Lord gave, and the Lord "hath taken away; and blessed be the name of "the Lord!"

Here endeth the *history*, the earthly *hopes*, and the *name* of Benlet.

CONTINUATION OF THE FAMILY HISTORY BY G. SELBY.

MRS. BENNET gives me her permission to recapitulate the past melancholy events, so far as to connect them with the succeeding part of the family history. Though the *name* of *Bennet* is *lost*, his posterity are *not extinct*, the hopes of his children revive, and they look forward to the blessings which Providence reserves for them.

The death of the friend and brother of my heart, was a severe stroke to every person in the family. Though my soul was penetrated with grief, I was obliged to conceal it, and to be the comforter of the rest; this affliction sunk the deepest into the mind of Mr. Bennet, yet both he and his excellent wife strove to conceal their grief from each other. Mrs. Bennet exerted her utmost resolution, and gave an example to the rest of us. Mr. Bennet strove to do the same; whenever his grief became too *apparent*, he used to retire into his *study*, and there implore Heaven to grant him fortitude and composure; but he lost his *rest*, and his *appetite*, and sometimes was sick and fainting. We made him take the air often, and I insisted upon performing his pastoral duties. Mrs. Bennet observed every turn in his countenance; and used

every method to amuse his mind, and restore his health.

By her desire I wrote to the Earl of D——, informing him of Mr. V. Bennet's death, Mr. Bennet's state of health, and his daughter's engagement to me.

In the last stage of Mr. V. Bennet's sickness, Mr. Lucas wrote to his father, desiring that he might accompany his two eldest sons in a tour through Switzerland, and part of Germany. By Mr. Bennet's order, I gave him an account of the hopeless state of young Bennet, and the situation of the rest of the family. Afterwards, I wrote him word of the young man's death, and the effect of it upon his father. We now received letters of friendship and condolence from him. Mr. Bennet seemed to revive, and to exert all the resolution he was master of to overcome his grief. He continued to retire into his study several times in the day, and sometimes staid several hours there. Mrs. Bennet and myself thought he was too often and too long *alone;* we hinted so much to him; but he assured us that the time he *spent there*, was the *source* of the amendment we perceived in him; and that both his health and spirits were the *better* for it.

One day that Mrs. Bennet was uneasy at his long stay there, I went and tapt at the door; it

was a quarter of an hour before I had any answer; at last I heard him speak in a faltering voice that alarmed me. He opened the door, and spoke imperfectly; he asked my pardon, and told me he had fallen asleep. After he was somewhat recovered, I led him into the parlour, and told Mrs. Bennet the reason we staid so long; he looked so placid and cheerful, that she was quite satisfied.

From this day we perceived a gradual alteration in Mr. Bennet; he grew heavy, sleepy, lethargic; he looked perfectly easy; but after eating, or whenever his attention was not *kept up*, he dropped asleep.

Mrs. Bennet soon observed it, and mentioned it to me. I could not deny that I saw it as plainly.

The event too well justified our fears. We sent for an eminent physician, and proceeded by his directions; but his distemper gained ground. He was easy and happy, unless when disturbed; and then he would beg us to leave him. I am well and happy, he would say; why do you interrupt me! Once, when he saw Mrs. Bennet in tears, he seemed in great emotion.—Do not let me see you weep, he said; I cannot bear it!—Another time he said to her, I am going to leave you, wife of my soul! You must give this living to Selby, and make him your son.—Another time, I am going to be happy;

why should you be wretched! We shall meet again hereafter.

Mr. Bennet died thirteen months after his son. Never was man more beloved and lamented; the whole parish were present at his funeral, at which I assisted as chief mourner. I paid the sad last duties to my *friend* and my *father*, whom I loved as much as one human being could love another.

This shock, though long expected, was severely felt by Mrs. Bennet, insomuch that her children were alarmed for *her life;* a life of infinite value to them. Their attentions were so tender, that she could not but be affected by them. She promised them to wrestle with her grief, and to look forward to the comforts that remained to her; to endeavour to live for them.

After the first edge of the grief of the family was a little abated, I wrote to Mrs. Lucas, informing her of Mr. Bennet's death. She wrote an answer, and conjured Mrs. Bennet, by their long friendship and near relationship, to leave the scene of her late sorrows, and come to her in Staffordshire; to spend some time there, till her grief should be softened by degrees, and her health established by change of air, exercise, and the company of her friends. She desired her to bring all her *children* without scruple, and her own servants to attend her. She besought her to make

no excuses, for that she would not *accept any*; and desired *us* to bring her without delay, for that she was certain her cousin's grief would not abate while she staid at S——.

We all seconded Mrs. Lucas's invitation, and besought Mrs. Bennet to accept it. It was with the utmost difficulty we prevailed on her. I wrote to Mrs. Lucas, that as soon as we had performed some necessary duties at S——, we would thankfully accept her invitation.

Mrs. Bennet was obliged to attend to business, which in the *very act* turned her mind from the objects of her *distress* to those of her *affection*. She was the executrix of the will.

Just at this time, my good friend Mr. Butler took refuge in our parish; he had been ill-used and persecuted for his *supposed opinions*.

As soon as I was inducted to the living of S——, I engaged Mr. Butler to be my curate for one year, and prevailed on a farmer in the parish to take him into his family as a boarder.

I next wrote to Lord D——, by Mrs. Bennet's order, and in her name, begging him to suffer Miss Melcombe to continue with the remains of the Bennet family. The young lady wrote also herself, but with every *precaution*, lest she should offend her *haughty parent*. It was as follows:

"Sophia Melcombe, with every sentiment of duty and obedience, requests of the gentleman

who has hitherto been her *guardian*, that he will permit her to remain in that family, to which her heart is allied by every tye of gratitude and affection."

Lord D—— answered her letter, to Mrs. Bennet; he lamented the loss of her husband and son; he thanked her for her affection and care to his *ward;* he desired that she might continue under her *protection*, as long as it should be agreeable to all the parties concerned.

Sophia's fortune had been placed in the public funds by Mr. Bennet during her childhood; and he ordered, by his will, that as soon as she should come of age, it should be surrendered into her own hands. He had saved, and added to it, sufficient to make it full three thousand pounds.

Every point relating to the executorship being settled, I conducted Mrs. Bennet and her daughters to the house of Mrs. Lucas, where she was móst cordially received.

I took up my residence with Mr. and Mrs. Bates, who treated me as an old and intimate friend, or rather as the *son* of Mrs. Bennet. The lenient hand of time, the good offices of her friends, the piety and goodness of her own heart, enabled that excellent woman to reduce the excess of her grief within the limits of reason; and her affection for her remaining chil-

dren, made her interested in all that concerned them.

Some months after Mr. Bennet's death, I ventured to solicit her to confirm my engagement to her daughter. She told me, she wished me to defer our marriage till the year was *fully expired*, and we should return to the village of S——.

I shall not, said she, reside at the parsonage; I have a little house in my eye, which I intend to purchase; it shall be fitted up for Sophia and me; we will be your neighbours and friends, and we will share your hopes and comforts.

The eldest Lucas, came to his parents house to take his leave, before he went on his travels. The second son came also from a visit to a relation of his father's; he was an amiable youth, and the reverse of his brother in every thing.

The elder brother took particular notice of Miss Meloombe, but in a manner that shewed he thought he did her too much honour by it. She had an unfeigned dislike to him, and avoided his company as much as possible. The second directed his attentions to Miss Bennet, but in a manner the most engaging and polite. He lamented her engagement to me, and determined to suppress his passion; hoping that time, absence, and travelling, would enable him to overcome it. He behaved as a friend and bro-

ther to me; owned his wishes, but frankly resigned all pretensions.

The elder Lucas took an impertinent liberty with Miss Melcombe; she repulsed him, with *spirit* equal to his *own*.

He resented her disdain; he told her it was time for her to forget Valentine Bennet. She answered him, that she *never desired to forget him*;—But, said she, if Valentine Bennet had never lived on earth, I could never have loved Valentine Lucas.—He was in a rage; he threatened revenge.

She thought proper to relate the whole story to Mrs. Bennet; and this circumstance made us turn our eyes homeward, thinking it best to put an end to our visit.

Mrs. Lucas was unwilling to consent to her departure.—You have not yet finished your year, my dear cousin, said she; and that was the time I *proposed* to *detain* you *here*: I cannot consent to part with you, till it is expired.

Mrs. Bennet hinted, that there were some circumstances that rendered it proper to abridge that term. Mrs. Lucas insisted upon knowing what they were. Her cousin could not refuse her; she told her in confidence all that had passed.

Mrs. Lucas was vexed at her son's behaviour;

—Would to God, said she, that Valentine could engage Miss Melcombe's affections! but I fear his behaviour has given her a disgust to him. I will make him ask her pardon; and, perhaps, some time hence, when he has seen more of the world, and knows how to give others the same consequence he takes to himself; he may become worthy of her favour. I sincerely wish it could be so.

Miss Melcombe is the only person to decide this point, said Mrs. Bennet: I should wish to be excused interfering in this matter. I think it would be better to let it rest; especially as Mr. V. Lucas depends on Miss Melcombe's keeping it from you, unless he should offend her again.—You say true, my dear cousin. Let it rest till Valentine returns from his travels; it is best that in *these cases* the *heart* should take its own *course*. I will be silent in regard to what you have told me, and leave the event to Providence.

Mrs. Bennet thought it proper that I should return to S——, to prepare for her reception; and then invite her to come home. She gave me a commission to purchase the house she desired to have, for herself and Miss Melcombe.

By this time the melancholy year drew towards a conclusion. I received Mrs. Bennet's orders

to come and conduct her and her family home to their beloved village; and I joyfully hastened to obey the welcome summons.

At my arrival I found the young Lucas's were gone, which gave me great pleasure.—Mr. Valentine had asked pardon for his behaviour to Miss Melcombe; but I understood from her that it was in consequence of a *hint* from his mother; that Miss Melcombe was descended from a family superior to his own. The lady understood it so; and it gave her the highest contempt for him.

August 20. I made an acquaintance with Edward Saville, Esq. an amiable and accomplished young gentleman.

After some time spent in preparations, Mrs. Bennet was settled in her new habitation, and promised to complete my happiness as soon as the year should be expired.

September 21. May this day begin a new and auspicious æra! This day Gerard Selby and Anna Maria Bennet, were united in the holy bands of marriage, in the parish church of S——. Mrs. Bennet gave her daughter to *me*. Mr. Butler performed the ceremony.

The same day Edward Saville, Esq. made a proposal of marriage to Miss Sophia Melcombe, in the presence of my revered mother and myself.

LETTER XVII.

MR. SAVILLE TO MR. JOHNSON.

FRIEND of my virtue and my happiness! to you I must disclose my grief: I am almost distracted! forgive me if I utter nonsense, phrensy, and extravagance! The charmer of my soul, the arbiter of my happiness, is lost, is carried off! Oh, Heaven! Sophia Melcombe is stolen away from us.

The dear creature was walking with Dolly Grove from Mrs. Bennet's to the parsonage; two men watched them, till they came out of sight of any house; they then seized upon Sophia, and hurried her between them to a post-chaise at some distance; both she and her companion shrieked in vain for help.

They did not attempt to detain Miss Grove: she came running to the parsonage out of breath; she could not speak, but sat down, and fainted away.

Upon her recovery, she related the above particulars, which have thrown us into a state of confusion and distraction.

My apprehensions point out the author of this cruel mischief; that infernal woman, and her emissaries! Yes, I now understand it,—this is the revenge they threatened upon me; but I will hazard my life and fortune to discover this mystery of malice.

Mr. Selby is gone up to the hall; he will speak to that base woman; he will hear what she says, and judge by her behaviour what share she has in this villainy. In the mean time, my horses are getting ready to pursue them.

Young Elliott, of whom I have made mention before, came to Mr. Franklin's two days ago; he has offered his service to go with me, in pursuit of the darling of every heart in this family. We shall go to I——, and take a post-chaise there; a lad whom I had lately hired, will attend us on horseback; we shall travel night and day till we overtake them.

Mr. Selby is returned: he can learn nothing from the female magician of that inchanted castle. She heard his story with seeming surprize. —Bless me! said she, how extraordinary this adventure! how similar to what has happened to myself! This very morning, a young gentleman and lady eloped from my house. I am ignorant of their scheme, but I suppose they will be heard of on the other side of the Tweed.— Mr. Selby was very serious with her: he told her, that Miss Melcombe's relations were people of distinction; that they would call to a severe account, all that had any hand in this vile action. He soothed, he threatened her, but all in vain: she denied any knowledge of the action, or the persons concerned in it: but at

the same time he saw in her eye a look of triumph and satisfaction, the malignant triumph of vice over exemplary virtue.

He left her in indignation, and hastened back to acquaint us with the unsuccessful effort he had made.

My mind presages, that Lord S—— is the traitor who has carried away Sophia; and that Clayton and Miss Freewill, are the other pair. I will find them living or dead.

Honest Sam Elliott is my companion and comforter. I shall write to Mr. Selby a minute account of every thing, and he will transmit it to you till I can find leisure to write to you. My next will be from Loudon.

Adieu, my heart's friend and monitor,

EDWARD SAVILLE.

LETTER XVIII.

MR. SAVILLE TO THE REV. MR. SELBY.

Colchester, Monday, 12 o'clock.

DEAR SIR,

WHILE the horses were changing, I bought a quire of paper and a paper-case, which now serves me as a desk to write upon. I have already the satisfaction of knowing that I am in

the right track. I am now certain that Lord S—— and Mr. Clayton are the traitors; every circumstance confirms it.

At a village called Ardleigh, three miles from Colchester, we met two pair of horses with the postillions; they were very hot, and it immediately occurred to Elliott and me, that they were those hired by our adventurers. We stopped and questioned them.

I put money into their hands, and they told me all they knew. They were hired at I——; the post-chaises belonged to two gentlemen; each had an additional pair of horses to his own.

Each gentleman had a lady with him; they all answered the description I made of them. One lady had on a riding-dress, that was undoubtedly Miss Freewill; the other had a linen gown and coat, and a hat trimmed with green ribband. Too surely it was my angel Sophia, the true *Simplex Munditiis*.

The men saw but a glimpse of the ladies, for the blinds were drawn up all the way.

The relays met them on Ardleigh Heath. We hastened full speed after them, in hope to overtake them; but it seems they went on the back side of the town, we went the forward way, and they have again got the start of us. We changed horses with all possible expedition; and again we renew our chace.

Elliott longs to engage them, in his phrase.

If I could but see them in the offing, says he, I warrant I would soon be up with them.

Witham.

Again we have met the hack-horses on their return. The artful villains always contrive to change horses, before they come into the post-towns. They must have servants, to order and get them ready the moment they arrive; but by speaking to the postilions, we shall go to the same houses.

Brentwood.

The horses belonging to these felons are left here; they have taken fresh ones to Ilford. The landlord of the White-Hart tells us, that one of the gentlemen is a Lord, and the other a Baron-knight; one of them is brother to one of the ladies, the other a lover of the other lady; that she was going to steal a marriage with a man of low degree, but her brother prevented her; and is going to carry them abroad, to prevent the story from being known.

Artful villains! this accounted for the ladies reluctance to go with them.

He says, the ladies were lifted into the post-chaises; and the men bid the postilions drive like devils, for they should be late home. Oh that home, where is it to be found! I will have no home myself, till I know where that is.

Ilford.

Confusion and disappointment! The ravishers have again escaped us. We are tired and faint.

I am almost in despair; these men have ordered their postilions to drive them to some place in the borough of Southwark; the landlord is positive to this circumstance. I have desired him to get intelligence of the place where they stop, and I will reward him amply for his trouble.

I want little food, and no rest, till I know that our Sophia is in safety.

Southwark.

Intercepted, disappointed, fatigued in body and mind; mortified to death, and almost distracted!

Once within sight of the chaises; my servant making signs to the postilions to hasten after them, when we were stopped by two or three cursed carts and drays in Whitechapel; Elliott and I, urging, praying, threatening in vain, When these devilish impediments were removed. the chaises were out of sight.

Our postilions went whipping and driving over London Bridge, and to the Sun Inn in the Borough: and now here we are, without any chance of getting nearer to them.

I would set out again directly, but Elliott and the servants are against me.

I will not send you a letter in this state of uncertainty. I will walk out while the horses

are getting ready. When I think of what Sophia may suffer, I am almost distracted. Oh that I could meet the villain that has stolen her away! I would risk my life to recover her, and punish him.

Southwark, 5 o'Clock, Tuesday Afternoon.

Here I am still, my friend; but I am quite another man than when I spoke with you last. Hope warms my heart, and bids me communicate its cheering influence to all the friends of my dear Sophia.

With the first ray of light, I sallied forth into the street, hardly knowing which way I went. I had not gone far, before I saw over a shop-door, the name of *Searle*. I instantly recollected the name of Miss Jones's partner in trade; and it occurred to me, that she might possibly be of service to me, by making enquiries after such persons as our fugitives, and whether they were lodged in the Borough.

I asked for Mrs. Jones; observing her hint, that she passed for a widow. Presently after, I heard her voice, saying, Who can want me thus early? As soon as she saw me, she set up a kind of shout for joy.—Mr. Saville! how happy I am to see you here, Sir! But, if I am not mistaken, you do not look well nor happy?—Indeed I am neither, at this time; but I could not pass this door without enquiring after your health, Madam.

I should have been mortified to the last degree if you had, Sir. Pray walk into the parlour.—No, Madam, I cannot now stay; I am in pursuit of a villain, who has robbed me of all that is dear to me.—Robbed you of all that is dear, did you say? Is it a lady that you have lost, Sir?—Too surely it is; and I have reason to suspect it is one of Lady Belmour's crew, that has carried her away. Farewell, Madam.—Stay, Sir; perhaps I may be able to give you some tidings of her.—Would to heaven you could!—Permit me to try for it. She smiled, and went on.

"Whereas a gentleman and lady eloped from Lady Belmour's seat yesterday morning; whoever brings tidings of them, shall receive the acknowledgments of Edward Saville, Esq. beside the rewards of their own hearts. Am I right, Sir?"—I shook my head.—Your account is only in part, Madam; there were two pairs.—Right again, Sir; there were so.—Dear Madam, be explicit. Do you know where they are lodged?—Not absolutely, Sir; but I know one that can tell me.—You surprize and rejoice me. Tell me all you know, for I am on the rack of impatience.—Walk in then, Sir; the shop is not a proper place.—She led me into the parlour, and seated me and herself. Now, Sir, you must have patience to hear me explain how I came by my

nformation. I mentioned in my last letter to you, a gentleman, my good friend.—Your husband, I presume?—No, Sir? but he visits me with that expectation. About a fortnight ago, this gentleman Mr. Barton, received a message from Mr. James Marshall, who is a gentleman, as they call it, to Lord S—— (do not be impatient, Sir; you will find this preface necessary) —Mr. Marshall was bred a sailor, and was acquainted with Mr. Barton many years ago. He sent for my friend to a tavern hard-by; and after some conversation, and a profession of the highest opinion of his honour and integrity, he told him that he had pitched upon him to entrust with a secret of great consequence; and to execute a commission, which, when performed, would lay an obligation upon Lord ——, as well as himself; and obtain an ample recompense beside. He then told him, that Lord S——, and a gentleman his friend, were to carry off two ladies with whom they were in love; and intended to marry them.

That they had resolved not to go to Scotland, lest they should be pursued by guardians or by rivals; but they intended to go over to the Continent, and to marry there; to conceal for a time their place of residence; and, when it should be convenient, they would own their marriages, and return to their respectives homes.

They want a friend, said he, to provide them a ship, and to carry them over to Ostend, or to some other neutral port. I wish that you, Sir, would undertake this commission.—This commission, answered Mr. Barton, is out of my way; I am now in the King's service; and am resolved to continue in it as long as I shall go to sea.—I am sorry for it, said Marshall; but still you know a great many persons in the trading vessels, you might easily find a man that would be glad of this employment.—Why perhaps I might, said Mr. Barton; and since it will oblige you, I will make enquiry for you.—But you must go about it directly, said Marshall.

I hope this elopement is to be with the ladies consent, said Mr. Barton; otherwise I will have nothing to do with it.—Oh yes, past all doubt, answered Marshall; the gentlemen are men of nice honour, and generosity also, and you may depend upon a handsome gratification for your part of the commission.—Well, I will try what I can do for you, and let you know my success, said Mr. Barton. After settling a mode of intercourse, they parted.

Some days after this interview, Mr. Barton was in company with a young man, who was going to Ostend soon, as master of a trading vessel; he proposed this commission to him; and he was willing to take the whole party, as

passengers aboard his ship. Mr. Barton gave intelligence of this, to Mr. Marshall; and he desired Mr. Barton to make an agreement with Capt. Dunton. Marshall gave notice to his Lord, and he prepared for the enterprize. Marshall hired a house at Blackwall, ready-furnished, where they are to stay till the ship is ready to sail. They were expected there last night; and Mr. Barton was there to receive them. Capt. Dunton is not yet come on board the ship; but Mr. Barton is employed by him to attend the passengers, and settle the terms with them. Every thing is preparing on board the ship for their reception; but you are just come in time to lend your assistance, or else to frustrate their schemes. And now, Sir, I hope I have made you some amends for my tedious preface—have I not?

My dear friend, said I, you surprise and rejoice me past expression!—I am the most fortunate of men to meet with you! And I, Sir, am a fortunate woman, to be able to repay my benefactor for his goodness to me, by a service of equal importance to himself. But really, Sir, I did not think that Miss Freewill had been of so much consequence to you.—Miss Freewill! said I; how could you suppose it? No, though I would serve any woman in distress, *she* is not the object of my affections.—Oh, then it is the other lady, I suppose. May I ask her name?—

Miss Melcombe, said I; I hope you will one day know her, and be entitled to her friendship.—But, Sir, are not the ladies carried away by their own consent?—One of them I can swear is not; and I have reason to think, the other is not consenting. But when can I see Mr. Barton?

Sir; when he knows he has been imposed on by a false story, he will in justice to his own character, be yours and the ladies friend.—But when shall I see him?—Some time to-day, Sir, or this evening at farthest. I will send for him directly; and then I will let you know; where are you to be found?—At the sign of the Sun, hard-by; my friend and the servants are waiting my return.

I ran back to the inn, as if I went through the air. Elliott was expecting me; he was surprised at the alteration in my looks.—I led him into the parlour, and told him all that had passed. He took his part in my good fortune. We sent the chaise and postilions back to Ilford; after which I sat down with him to breakfast, with some satisfaction; and I am now waiting impatiently for my friend Miss Jones's summons.

Southwark, Wednesday Noon.

I did not return to my inn, till a late hour last night; but I will now relate what passed in the evening. I sat with my watch in my hand, counting the minutes till seven o'clock, when I

received the welcome message from my friend Susan Jones. Elliott and I ran thither in an instant; we were introduced to Mrs. Searle, Miss Jones, and Mr. Barton. Mr. Barton apologized for accepting such an employment from persons of whom he had no better knowledge, and said, that he would not for the world be concerned in so base an action.—My good Sir, said I, it is in your power to make ample amends for what you have done ignorantly, but without any ill design. Let us come to the point. Where are these worse than robbers to be found.—Stop a little while, Sir, and hear me! You would seek them; a quarrel would ensue; you would fight them, but are you sure that you would get the better of them? Perhaps you might be the sufferers; and the ladies might not be delivered after all.

What then would you advise me to do, Sir?—I am ready, Sir, to give you both my advice and assistance: I wish as much as you do, to rescue the ladies; but I would do it with as little mischief as possible. They were carried away by stratagem, and I would recover them by the same means. I think it would not be difficult to effect it; and I offer you my assistance for this purpose.

There is some reason in what you say, Sir; but how then would you advise us to proceed?

Why, Sir, I am trusted by the gentlemen; I can go to the house when I please; I can carry two or three stout lads with me, and either *find* or *make* an opportunity to free them.—Listen to me, said Elliott: I will be one of these lads. I will watch an opportunity to speak to them; Miss Melcombe knows me, and she will put herself under my protection; and when I have got the prizes in my possession, I will sheer off, and bring them into any port you shall appoint.

Very well, said I; and I will be of the party also.

Avast there, brother, said he; you are too well known.—Let me have the command of this expedition, said Barton. You shall both be upon the spot; this young gentleman shall go to the house, and Mr. Saville shall hold himself in readiness to take charge of the ladies.

I agreed to this proposal. Mr. Barton advised that we should disguise ourselves as common sailors, and that some of his lads should attend us; that we should go to Blackwall, lodge at the Mermaid, and wait there for his orders.

These preliminaries being settled, we spent the evening very sociably.

I am now preparing for our expedition; having put every thing in train.

Here we are, my dear friend, waiting the

arrival of our friend Mr. Barton to begin our operations.

Mrs. Searle's shop furnished us with the necessary accoutrements; and here are a party of sailor-lads of us, all in the same uniform. I am Jack Robinson, at your service; Elliott goes by his own name; for he is not known to the wretches, who are a disgrace to the name of gentlemen; two clever brisk lads of Barton's crew, called Smith and Hardy, and my servant Tom Styles, make up the whole company.

This Hardy is a clever young fellow; he has managed well to gain admittance to the castle we are about to besiege, and to which we shall soon make a nearer approach.

Hardy delivered his message to Mr. Marshall, which was to inform him that Capt. Dunton was expected at the ship in two days; or three at farthest. He added, My master Barton has sent three more hands for your service; they are at the Mermaid, where they will wait your orders, and obey your signals.

Marshall was very much pleased with his offers of service; he told him that he might come to the house whenever he pleased; or, if he liked it, he might lodge there, and the rest might stay at the inn till they were wanted.

Elliott desires Hardy to introduce him to the

servants; and then I reckon, said he, that I shall have gained the first step to our designed attack.

Wednesday Night, 11 o'Clock.

The sailors are returned, shouted for joy of their success; they have been well received in the kitchen; Hardy danced a horn-pipe; Elliott sung sea-songs; the servants enjoyed their company; sailors only were always cheerful, they said.

Lord S—— shewed himself to them; he thanked them for their assiduity in his service; he spoke highly of his regard for Mr. Barton. He ordered Marshall to entertain them with whatever they liked best. They supped there, and then returned to the inn to tell me their success; but Hardy goes back, and will sleep in the house; he seems already a favourite in the family. Having thus happily begun our operations, I will dispatch this letter by the post, for I know you will be impatient to hear of our proceedings.

Mrs. Searle and Mrs. Jones have offered their house as an asylum to the ladies. I shall carry them thither for the present, and I will ever remember their kindness. Accept and divide among you, the heart of your

EDWARD SAVILLE.

P. S. You may direct to John Robinson, sailor, at the Mermaid, Blackwall.

LETTER XIX.

MR. SELBY TO EDWARD SAVILLE, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

ACCEPT the united thanks and blessings of all my family, for your early and most welcome intelligence. You will know by your own feelings what we have suffered.

We entirely approve the method the worthy Mr. Barton advises; proceed by stratagem by all means; and, if you should fail of success, my mother will write directly to the earl of D——, inform him of all that has happened to his daughter, and desire him to apply to the laws of the land for her recovery. In the mean time we wish you to have the pleasure and the merit of her deliverance; and we thank Mr. Elliott sincerely, for his generous friendship and assistance.

You will either send or carry the letter I inclose to Mrs. Barclay, in Bloomsbury; she is my mother's half-sister. I have asked her protection for our beloved Sophia. You will not be displeased with an introduction to Mrs. Barclay; she is a sensible, polite, and amiable woman. I think it likely that Mrs. Barclay will

detain our Sophia some time, to recover her fatigues of body and mind; and to give her a view of the capital, which she has never seen; and I think it *probable*, that you will take lodgings near them.

I should say much more of our obligations to you, if I did not think that you already look forward to a *reward* equal to the service you are performing. Mr. and Mrs. Franklin unite in affections, prayers, and blessings, for you; with my wife and mother, and your sincere and affectionate friend,

G. SELBY.

LETTER XX.

MR. SAVILLE TO THE REV. MR. SELBY.

Blackwall, Thursday.

THIS morning our friend Elliott is gone with Hardy to take a survey of the enemy's fortifications; he will lay a plan, he says, to storm the castle, and take the garrison prisoners. He promises to be back by dinner.

Thursday Evening.

Elliot was urged to stay to dinner; he accept the invitation with seeming modesty and reluctance; he has picked up the following particulars.

Marshall is chief manager; and Mrs. Catherine the housekeeper is his adjutant; she attends the ladies, and watches all their motions. Under this woman, is a cook, and a housemaid, both very ignorant and vulgar, and capable of nothing but obedience; one footman of Lord S——'s, another of Mr. Clayton's; they are all quite easy, and secure of not being detected.

Catherine suffers only herself and the housemaid to approach the ladies; they live upon the first floor; the ladies' apartment is towards the garden; but when the gentlemen insist upon their company, they go into the dining-room to them.

Catherine says, they sleep together, and that they look pale, and complain of bad rest. She ridicules their delicacy. I can hardly bear the idea of their sufferings; if I were to meet either of the villians, I should trust their punishment to no other hands than my own.—I could execrate them.—But words are of no effect:—I will speak by my actions. Hardy looks sweet upon the housemaid; Elliott ogles Mrs. Catherine herself; she looks at him, with contempt and disdain.

Blackwall, Friday.

Elliott made another visit in the evening; he observed the house; he went into the garden;

he says he has planned a fine manœuvre, but he will not tell me what, till he sees the success.

Friday Noon.

Elliott is returned in high spirits. I could hardly get him to tell his tale; which is as follows: I went into the garden yesterday, in order to discover which room was the ladies' lodging.

This morning I took a long stick, tied my handkerchief to the end of it, mounted a tree, and waved it before the ladies' window: Hardy kept a good look-out the while. Presently I saw a pretty lady at the window; but I cannot say which it was. I then lowered my flag; and, instead of it, fixed a piece of paper in a cleft in the stick, which I had ready prepared for the opportunity; and put it close to the window. The lady opened it, and took the paper; upon which I put my hand to my heart, in token of my sincerity: then my finger upon my lips, to signify my secrecy; then bowed my body, and waited her commands.

The words written on the paper were these;

Be of good cheer,
Relief is near.

Soon after I saw two ladies, one of whom I immediately knew was Miss Melcome; they made signs for me to wait. One of them took a pen-

cil, and wrote on a slip of paper, which she fastened to my flag as before:

I joy to hear relief is near;
But joy with fear, until I hear
What friends are near to give us cheer.
Be you sincere, and meet me here.

I took the note, kissed my hand, and descended the tree; ran into the house, and sat down with the servants for a few minutes; drank a pint of ale with them, and then came away. I would not seem impatient, though I thought every minute an hour, till I had brought you these good tidings.

You will easily conceive my surprize and joy, at this good omen; we are both elevated by it. We expect honest Barton this evening, and then we will consult him about the grand attempt: in the mean time I will write a note to Sophia, and copy it for yours and the ladies' satisfaction.

TO MISS SOPHIA MELCOMBE.

"Two faithful and true knights-errant, have engaged to deliver the fair damsels, who have been carried away by two false and treacherous villains. They are commissioned by Miss Melcombe's dearest friends to guard her from insults, and to convey her to a place of safety. Anxious for her peace, they wish her to be well

assured that her companion is to be *trusted*; and whether she is detained without her own consent. If it be really so, they will also take charge of her, and guard her likewise to the same asylum. Be cautious, and burn this directly. You will hear further soon. Prepare to depart by the first opportunity, which your true friends are watching to *find*, or *make* for your deliverance.

E. Saville.
S. Elliott."

Elliot goes again after dinner, and will watch for an opportunity to give this note to Miss Melcombe.

Friday evening. The note is delivered as the former was.—Sophia smiled; and kissed her hand to Elliott.—Happy fellow!

Captain Barton is come. Now for more active measures. The worthy man has given his advice as follows:

Captain Dunton is come to his ship this day: it is his intention to invite the gentlemen to dine with him on board it to-morrow, and to entertain and make his agreement with them for their passage to Ostend. I shall be present, which will take away all suspicion of my being privy to your undertaking. Whilst we are all on board the ship, you must carry off the ladies. If you can get Marshall out of the way, you can easily ma-

nage Catherine; and you may make the other servants believe, that you are sent by the gentlemen to entice the ladies on board the ship. You must have chaises in readiness.

Bravo! bravo! said both Elliott and I; we will follow this plan exactly; and if it should be frustrated, we will apply to the law for assistance to recover the ladies.

Poor Freewill! I have hardly thought of *her*, my mind has been so engrossed by its mistress; but she shall share the blessing of recovered liberty. My dear Sophia will befriend her inexperienced youth, with her advice and assistance; and she will reap the benefit of experience, to conduct herself with prudence for the remainder of her life.

Saturday Morning. I sat up all night: Barton went to-bed: Elliott threw himself across two chairs: Happy man! he can sleep any where. I have written a letter to Mrs. Barclay; I have also written another note to Sophia.

Elliott is gone to the house; Barton on board the ship; Smith into the Borough for a hackney-coach, to wait by the hour: we thought it better than to take a carriage of any kind from this place, lest it should be traced. Hardy is gone with Elliott to keep watch.

Mr. Marshall will receive a penny-post letter this morning, acquainting him that a relation of

his is in great distress, at a house of confinement in the city; and wishes to see him for half an hour, on business of the greatest consequence.

Mr. Barton gave us the name of his cousin; who was the most intimate friend he had formerly, and a sailor.

Saturday, 11 *o'Clock*. Elliott has delivered my note; Sophia was waiting at the window for him. She returned him another.

"S. M. has no doubt that her companion is equally desirous of deliverance with herself. She laments her former levity and inadvertency; both will be on their guard; and wait patiently the moment that restores their liberty."

A note from Mr. Barton by a stout sailor just arrived:

"Dear Sir,

"The bearer of this will be at your service, if you want another assistant; keep him at the inn, as he will not be known at the house. The gentlemen have accepted the invitation, and will be here before three o'clock. Let Stokes, the bearer, watch their coming on board, and bring you notice. You know your signals. I shall appear ignorant, and so will my lads; but I shall hope to see you very soon afterwards. Pray let me know where to find you.

I am your most humble servant,

12 o'clock. "JOHN BARTON."

I have sent Stokes back to Mr. Barton with my address at Mrs. Barclay's; I shall take lodgings as near her house as possible. As soon as we get to a stand of coaches, I shall quit that we have hired, and take another to Bloomsbury, to avoid pursuit. Elliott is gone back to the house; he and Hardy are upon duty, waiting for my coming to begin the attack.

One o'Clock. Stokes is returned; he is set upon the watch; and I am alone, counting the minutes by my watch. Time now moves with leaden feet to me.

Two o'Clock. Elliott has been here to tell me, that Marshall has told him he is obliged to go into the city, after his Lord is gone on board the ship.

Every thing seems to favour our undertaking. I have sent Elliott back to his post; Stokes is watching the gentlemen's going on board the ship; I am waiting for notice of Marshall's departure to visit his friend. Smith is returned with a coach; he takes his post on the box, and is drinking with the coachman; but has orders to be cautious not to order too much liquor.

Past 3 *o'Clock.* The gentlemen are gone to the ship; Stokes is here waiting with me, to hear from the house; Hardy is this moment arrived with orders for Stokes and Jack Robinson, alias Edward Saville, to come directly.

I fly this moment, to the charmer of my heart and to your friend, Mrs. Selby's sister, Mrs. Bennet's daughter.

Saturday Night, 12 o'Clock, Bloomsbury.

Rejoice with me, my dear friends! Selby, Franklin, and your ladies! Miss Melcombe and Miss Freewill, are safe lodged at Mrs. Barclay's. I cannot now send particulars, but you shall have them soon. Heaven be praised for our success! Before I go to rest, I send this by the post. I am this moment the happiest of men, and more than ever yours,

EDWARD SAVILLE.

LETTER XXI.

MR. SAVILLE TO THE REV. MR. SELBY.

Sunday Evening.

THIS day I have had the honour and pleasure to attend Mrs. Barclay and the ladies to church. I am going to drink tea at Mrs. Barclay's: if I come away in time, I will bestow an hour upon you; if not, you must wait till my spirits are subsided. Sophia calls me her deliverer. Every look towards me confesses her regard for me. She expects me at this moment.—I fly to meet her—adieu!

Monday Morning.

I will now give you a detail of all that passed on Saturday. I went directly to the house, at Elliott's summons by Hardy, and was admitted into the hall! where I waited some minutes, which seemed so many hours. At length Elliott came to me; he told me the dinner had been carried up into the ladies room, but they had scarcely eat a mouthful. I can now, said he, introduce you into the dining-room, without being seen by any body; and then you must entice the ladies down stairs, and you may perhaps steal out unobserved. Hardy is waiting upon the stairs—lose no time.

I bade Stokes wait at the outward door, and prevent any body from going out or into the house; then followed Elliott up stairs, and went directly into the dining-room. The ladies were sitting at the table; at sight of me they started, and Sophia said,—Fellow, what brings you here?—*Your business*, lady, said I; we are come to give you liberty. Do you not know me?—She looked hard at me.—I am Saville, said I; and this is Elliott: lose no time, but trust yourselves with us.—They both looked terrified, and each exclaimed, Mr. Saville!—I took Sophia's hand; Have you got your bundles ready? said I; let us go this moment!—Elliott offered his to Miss Freewill, saying, Fair lady, my hand,

heart, and life, are at your service.—We have nothing here, said Sophia, but what our betrayers have provided for us.

They trembled so, they could hardly stand. Elliott and I, said every thing to encourage them.—Now is the moment of deliverance, said I; let it not pass, I beseech you! have courage, dearest Sophia! hasten away this instant.—They rose up to go; at that moment Catherine's voice was heard upon the stairs, calling Elliott to dinner: he answered, I am coming, Mrs. Catherine!—Instantly she burst into the room—Heyday! who have we here?—A friend and shipmate of mine, Mrs. Catherine.—And what brings him here pray?—To speak to me.—In the ladies' apartment? said she; pray go down both of you this minute! or I will give orders to have you treated according to your deserts.—Elliott winked at me.—This is no time for ceremony, said I.—Elliott came behind Catherine, and put a handkerchief he had prepared over her mouth. I tied her hands behind, and then we pushed her into the inner room and locked the door upon her.—Now this moment, said I; for life, love, and liberty!—We took each our charge, and went down the stairs hastily, but with as little noise as possible. Stokes was at the street door; Elliott called Hardy, and told him where Catherine was.—You know your cue,

said he; see us set off, and then release her and alarm the servants.—We ran to the coach as fast as the ladies' fear would suffer them. Smith jumped off the box, opened the door, and put us in; and then Stokes got up behind, and Smith and Hardy returned back into the house.

The ladies were in great agitations; Sophia was ready to faint; I supported and encouraged her. I then took proper notice of Miss Freewill, who seemed dejected and uneasy.

After we were got past London-bridge, they both revived; and then began to enjoy their deliverance, and to pay me their acknowledgments. —You are equally obliged to Mr. Elliott, who likewise thinks himself honoured and happy in being employed in your service.—Elliott answered for himself, and they thanked him for his gallantry in their service. We then informed them of every step we had taken since their departure, and explained all our contrivances; and I did not forget to mention our obligations to my friend Susan Jones, and her friend the worthy Mr. Barton.

Miss Freewill was under evident dejection of spirits. Sophia called upon her to be cheerful; she burst into tears. Every one offered to comfort and encourage her.—I am ashamed to be uneasy at this time, it has the appearance of ingratitude; but with what face can I intrude

myself into the lady's house where you are going? I am a stranger to her, and my behaviour must have an improper look.

My dear companion in trouble, said Sophia, do not mention such a thing: if I am a welcome guest, my fellow-sufferer must be so too. Wait a few days, and consider of it; I have no doubt, that Mrs. Barclay will receive you with the same kindness as myself; if she does not, I will leave her house, and we will go to lodgings together.

Spoken like yourself, said I; and I am sure Miss Freewill will agree to whatever you propose.—I will indeed, said she.

When the coach stopped at Mrs. Barclay's, Poor Freewill exclaimed, Let me beg the favour of you all, not to let this lady know that I ever was at Lady Belmour's.—We assured her that nothing should be said that could be construed to *her* disadvantage. We all made rather an awkward appearance at our introduction to this lady! I apologised for not waiting upon her before, and gave my reasons for the delay; but she behaved with so much frankness and politeness, that she dissipated all our fears in a quarter of an hour.—I told her that Miss Freewill had been Miss Melcombe's companion in her compelled flight; and explained the circumstances of their detention. Sophia, in the tenderest manner, asked her protection for her

companion and friend.—Mrs. Barclay soon stopped her solicitation, by assuring her of the most cordial welcome, and that she thought herself honoured by the charge of them both.

I begged Mrs. Barclay to permit her servant to get a lodging for Mr. Elliott and myself, in the same street. Accordingly, he took a lodging for us within a few doors. We all supped together with the utmost cheerfulness; my servant came to us at nine o'clock, and we retired at eleven to our new lodgings, and left the ladies to their rest, which was equally welcome to all of us.

Miss Melcombe will inclose a letter in my cover. I congratulate your family, and myself also; I am as happy as any man can be, in the present situation of our affairs; and always your sincere friend and servant,

E. Saville.

LETTER XXII.

MISS MELCOMBE TO MRS. BENNET.

I demand the felicitations of my dear mamma and sister upon this happy occasion!—I am again restored to my dear friends, and they to me.

I am equally obliged for Miss Freewill as

myself.—Poor young lady! She is mortified that the gentlemen should know the house from whence she was taken.

My dear mamma will expect some account of our flight, captivity, and treatment from the men who thought proper to carry us off in so strange a manner.

My surprise was so great, that it overpowered all my faculties. I was like a person in a frightful dream, who strives to call out but cannot speak; to run, but cannot move a step: so did I endeavour to cry for help, but my voice faltered, and my tongue seemed to stick to my mouth. My ravisher perceived my inexpressible terror and distress; he asked my pardon for the step he had taken, he made me a thousand assurances of honourable treatment. After some hours silent agony I was relieved by a shower of tears; my courage revived; and I resolved not to desert myself, and to hope that Providence would yet make a way for my escape. But when I thought of the distress of my dear mamma and my beloved sister, and the trouble I should give to the worthy Mr. Selby, who for their sakes would do every thing to recover me, my heart gave way to the tenderness of my affections, and I shed torrents of tears. Lord S—— left nothing unsaid to comfort me; and I must do him the justice to say, that his behaviour was respect-

ful and delicate, from the first hour to the last that I was in his company; but he doubtless thought this the only way to make himself an interest in my favour. I will not deny, my dear friends, that I thought of Mr. Saville often; nay, I promised myself that he would pursue, and perhaps rescue me; but then I trembled at the encounter between him and Lord S——, which I thought could not happen without mischief, if not *murther*.

The Venetian blinds were drawn before all the windows of the chaise, and it drove so fast that I could see no objects distinctly. We passed through the skirts of several towns, of which I know not the names; but stopt not till we came to Brentwood, as I have since learned.

Lord S—— told me I should soon meet with a female companion, who he hoped would prove an agreeable friend.—I made very little reply to any thing that he said.

It is a young lady who is going upon the same excursion, said he, under the care of a friend of mine. He is also a friend of Mr. Saville's, who I believe is no stranger to you, Madam.—I made no reply.—He proceeded: Mr. Saville, I suppose, has misrepresented me to you, Madam; as he has prejudiced Miss Freewill against Mr. Clayton.—I started.—We are not professed rakes and libertines, as he has called us; we

respect women of virtue and honour. We have resolved to forsake all others; and to attach ourselves to two such women, as might ensure the regularity and happiness of the remainder of our lives.

Surely, Sir, said I, you must have entertained strange opinions of these women of virtue and honour you talk of, if you could suppose they would be compelled to receive your addresses. Suffer me, Madam, to account for my opinions and my actions also. I had heard your character before I saw you; Farmer Hobson's daughter, who was seduced into Lady Belmour's family, but whose principles were never totally corrupted, gave me such a character of you, and of Miss Bennet, and of the excellent woman her mother, that I ardently wished for a *wife* educated under her maternal eye. This poor girl deserves your pity—(the virtuous are ever the most ready to pity fallen innocence). She wept while she gave me this account of that worthy family; and wished herself the meanest servant in it, rather than what she now was. With infinite pleasure I see the tear of pity in Miss Melcombe's eye; she is above the insolent scorn of pretended virtue; she will not disdain to hear, and to answer my honest suit!—I coloured with anger and resentment; and, I dare

say, looked with the scorn he described.—He proceeded:

Hear me, Madam, without prejudice. Thus prepared to love, to revere you, I met you one day in my walks; you were leaning upon Mr. Saville's arm.—(I turned from him)—At that instant I thought I saw all the virtues personified. I saw him afterwards: I enquired of him concerning you; he refused to answer my enquiries; he refused Mr. Clayton his interest with Miss Freewill. We were both convinced that he would stand in the way of our application to you both. This put us both upon other expedients, and this compelled us to take the step which at present gives you so much offence, but which I hope you will one day forgive, if not approve.—I cannot, Sir, suffer you to encourage that hope; it would be injustice in me to give you such hope.—You are very cruel, Miss Melcombe! but I will not give up my hope, after the steps I have taken to fulfil it.—The steps you have taken are not the way to obtain it, Sir.

Every time he mentioned his expectations, I forbad them; and kept up as much dignity and distance as I could assume. At length the chaise drove into the yard of an inn; he in a manner carried me into a back-room, where I saw another gentleman and lady. The gentlemen saluted each other as dear and intimate friends;

they presented the lady and me to each other; she had been weeping, and looked more dejected than I; for my spirits were in some measure recovered, and I resolved to be upon my guard.

The gentlemen went out of the room and left us together; but I heard them at the door, speaking to a third person. I comforted my companion, and gave her my best advice; to pursue the same plan I had laid down for myself; to behave politely to these men, and keep them by that means at a greater distance than by reproaches or rudeness. She thanked me for my counsel, and promised to observe my directions. I looked out at the windows, which were only towards the stables, and saw a servant stationed under our windows. I went to the door, and there was another person; and went in again, fully convinced that every method was taken to prevent our escape.

Soon after, dinner was brought in by one of their servants; and none of the waiters were suffered to appear. Mr. Marshall, Lord S——'s valet, stood at the door, and the other servants brought the dishes in, followed by our tyrants; who came, and with the greatest obsequiousness invited us to eat. We sat down in consequence of the plan we had concerted; but you may believe we had not much appetite to our dinner.

They seemed transported to find us so compliant, and redoubled their politeness towards us.

They paid us a profusion of compliments, to which we made very little reply; and I told them, if they desired our conversation, they must speak upon such subjects as we could answer them. After the servants had dined, we were conveyed into the chaises, with the same precaution as before into the house; and nobody but their servants were suffered to see us. We were both comforted by the hopes of each other's company and advice.

In the evening I felt my spirits sink as the day-light abated; and when the chaise drove into a court, and I saw high walls all round the house we were carried to, my heart gave way, and I felt all the horrors of my situation.

We were conducted up stairs into a large dining-room, and from thence into a bed-chamber with a light closet in it. A woman of a bold and forward behaviour addressed us,—Your servant, my pretty ladies! You are welcome to this house! I am at your service to *dress* or *undress* you, or any kind of assistance you may have occasion for.—We received her very coolly; and she seemed to think so; for she drew up, and looked saucy.

Soon after, we were summoned to supper;

we were fatigued both in body and mind, and begged their permission to retire. They did not offer to detain us a moment; but took leave of us very politely, and wished us good repose; assuring us, that the house, and every person in it, were devoted to our service.

This bold woman (Catherine is her name) came in soon after, and offered us her assistance; we both refused it, and wished to remain by ourselves.—In those drawers, said she, are every thing you will have occasion for; and when you will please to accept my attendance, if you ring that bell, I will wait on you. Till then I wish you a good night.—So saying, she went out of the room, and locked the door after her.

We then examined the lock, and found there was a bolt, and also a bar on the inside; and having secured them, we went to-bed; and our fatigue was so friendly to us, that it sent us to rest; but we awoke early in the morning, and lay forming a thousand schemes and wishes for our escape.

When Catherine tapped at the door, I opened it; she seemed surprized to see us ready dressed without her assistance.—I suppose, said she, I may let the gentlemen know you are ready for breakfast?—We made her very short answers;

and she seemed to think us very proud, to a person of her consequence.

When we were summoned to breakfast, we went immediately; for I determined to give them no cause to complain of our want of politeness, lest they should use that as a pretence for behaving otherwise to us. After compliments and breakfast were past, and the servants withdrawn, Lord S—— began to lay open his intentions. He made proposals of marriage to me, in the most express terms: Said, He knew I was not of age; but that he would make such settlements as my friends could not disapprove.—I answered, That I had friends who would resent any ill-treatment I might receive; but that nobody had a right to dispose of me, without my own consent; and that I never would give that by compulsion.

Mr. Clayton said, That they were men of honour, and deserved to be treated with, upon fair and equal terms; that they expected we would give their proposals a full and serious consideration, for that their fate and ours depended upon it.

I trust that our fate and yours, are in better hands: to Heaven I commit them! the wickedness of men is counteracted by the wisdom of Providence, to whom I appeal, and on whom I rely.

You are very serious, Madam, said Mr. Clayton.—I am so, Sir; the case requires it; my *fate*, it seems, is in the balance.

He then talked of their *honour*, and their *principles;* and the benefits they expected from our conversation. Poor Miss Freewill wept, but said little. They mentioned Mr. Saville, and the ill offices they supposed he had done them. I assured them that they were mistaken.

Miss Freewill said the same; that Mr. Saville had never attempted to bias her, for or against any person.

He is a meddling, impertinent fellow, said Mr. Clayton; and has behaved very ungratefully, to those who have treated him both generously and politely.—To Lady Belmour, I suppose? said I.—He was ungrateful for her good offices.—You do well, Sir, to justify your *friend*.—However, Madam, I perceive that your partiality for Mr. Saville, leads you to justify him, at every one's expence.—Forbear, Clayton! said Lord S——, I will not believe Miss Melcombe has any partiality for him.

It seems, said Miss Freewill, that Mr. Clayton thinks every body partial to Mr. Saville, and that he makes love to every body, for he is jealous of his favour with every one.—D-mn the fellow! said Clayton, I hate to hear or to speak of him.

I am neither afraid nor ashamed to mention Mr. Saville, said I; he is the friend of our sex, because he is a friend to virtue; he may therefore be said to be in favour justly with us all.

The next day, finding us steady, Lord S—— artfully threw in a hint, that if our friendship excluded them from the advantages they hoped from it, they should wish they had not brought us together.—Clayton, more warm and less guarded, said, there were means to separate us. —Lord S—— chid him; Clayton, you are wrong. —To what end, said Clayton, is all this submission; when we receive nothing but disdain in return for our politeness?—Again you are wrong, said Lord S——.

Clayton muttered, This is only trifling, and gains no ground.—They would fain have engaged us at cards; they proposed whist, quadrille, piquet, any thing; we declined all. I thought any employment of this kind would lessen the distance between us. She told me, that her guardian was an old batchelor with strong peculiarities, who despised women, and hated trouble on their account; he had placed her with a family of his own relations, who were of low extraction and education. The man thought all female accomplishments superfluous, and treated them with contempt; the woman allowed her to read only books of devotion of her own choosing.

She used to carry her to the Tabernacle in an evening, when she had rather have been in company with those of her own age and degree; in short, by her account, if any one had strove to make religion and seriousness disagreeable, and to drive young people from it; this Mrs. Holden was the person for them to apply to. Miss Freewill had complained to her guardian; she asked for liberty and for books. He ordered her a Bible and Common-prayer-book, a Manual of Devotions, and a set of the Spectators; which, he said, were all the books a woman had any occasion for.—She had conversed with young people of birth and fortune; she had imbibed different notions of life and manners; she grew impatient of restraint, and determined to shake it off.

She made an acquaintance with Mrs. Watkins, who loved the world, and the pleasures of it, too well to give them up as long as she could keep her hold of them. Miss Freewill made complaints to her; and she advised her to leave the Holdens the first opportunity. Soon after this intimacy took place, Mrs. Watkins invited her to go a tour with her through the eastern counties; Lady Belmour's was the first visit they made.—I see I was wrong, said she; I went from one extreme to the other; but if ever I regain

my liberty, I will apply to the lord chancellor, and ask him to place me in a proper situation.

Every conversation we held with our ravishers, became more serious and interesting than the former. Lord S—— was offended by my steadiness; and Mr. Clayton grew out of patience with us both.

They began to threaten to separate us, unless we would show them more kindness, and give them some hope of succeeding with us.

Our affair began to grow very serious, it was drawing to a crisis; when on the Friday morning, as I was at the chamber-window, I saw a young man waving a handkerchief upon a long stick; I made a sign with my hand; he then took off the handkerchief, and put a piece of paper upon it; jumped into a tree, and put the stick close to the window. I opened it softly, and took the paper, which contained only these words:

Be of good cheer—relief is near.

I answered this hint in the same kind of doggrel; and desired to know from whence I was to expect it.—My companion was overjoyed, and readily gave credit to the advertisement; but I was fearful of believing too much.—Perhaps, said I, this may be a stratagem to draw us into their plot; and when we think to escape, we may be forced on board a ship: did you observe? the man was drest as a sailor.

This thought took off the comfort I should otherwise have received. I grew more uneasy every hour. I slept none the night following; poor Fanny Freewill now had the advantage of me, for she encouraged hope of deliverance, and strove in vain to give me a share of it.

The next morning happily dispelled my doubts and fears. Mr. Elliott delivered me a letter signed by himself and Mr. Saville, whose hand I had seen before; and I then recollected Mr. Elliott's features, and signified to him that I knew him. From that minute I recovered my hopes and spirits; and even our persecutors took notice of our altered looks. Lord S—— was pleased that we had recovered our spirits, and hoped that time would reconcile us to our *destiny*, as he called it. He therefore redoubled his assiduities; but Clayton was ill-humoured, and often urged Lord S—— to separate us; saying, He had no hopes while we kept together.

I find that Mr. Saville has given you a particular account of every thing that passed without doors, therefore I shall not repeat what you know already. You will conceive my distress, and you will judge of my joy at my escape, and of my gratitude to our deliverers. How much am I obliged to all my friends! to you, my dear Mr. Selby, for my kind and polite reception at Mrs. Barclay's; she is a most amiable woman;

there is an ease and freedom in her behaviour, that shews the difference between the manners of the capital, and those of the country.

She was as well acquainted with us in half an hour, as some people would in half a year. I am still farther obliged to her on Miss Freewill's account; she is equally polite and hospitable to her. She insists upon our staying a week or two with her, to make her amends, as she politely says, for the care and concern we have given her.

She will shew me every thing worth notice in London. Miss Freewill has been here more than once; but she will attend me also to some of the public places, if I will stay. This depends upon my dear mamma; if she gives me a beckon with her pen, I will return home immediately; but if she thinks it prudent and right to stay, she will signify her consent. If I return soon, I will ask, as a favour of her, that she will permit me to bring Miss Freewill with me to stay a few weeks, till she can determine about her future residence; she is at present very unhappy upon that subject. My mamma's good advice would now be of the greatest benefit to this young lady. Adieu, my dearest friends! I embrace you in my heart; and my warmest wishes and prayers attend you always, for I am ever yours,

SOPHIA MELCOMBE.

LETTER XXIII.

MR. SAVILLE TO THE REV. MR. SELBY.

FINDING that Miss Melcombe had written too much for one cover, I sallied out this day in pursuit of a senator to provide some more. I went to ———'s coffee-house, where I met Sir James T——, an old school-fellow, who readily gave me half a dozen. There I understood, that Lord S—— had but just left the coffee-house, as I entered it.

While Sir James was writing the covers for me, I sat down and wrote the following note for Lord S——.

"Lord S—— may think himself fortunate, if he does not hear from the friends of Miss Melcombe and Miss Freewill soon, in a way that would be disagreeable to him to answer: they do not mean to oppose violence to violence, nor to put themselves upon a level with men who could act as he and his friend have done; but if Lord S—— and Mr. Clayton do not withdraw themselves out of their reach, they will appeal to the laws of this country, to punish the offenders, and to hang out a warning to others.

ANONYMOUS."

I hope this threat will induce them to pursue

their intended trip to Ostend; and will free the ladies from any future attempts from them.

I beg the favour of you, my dear Sir, to send all the letters I have written since I left your house, to Mr. Johnson at Cambridge. I am under an engagement to acquaint him with every step I shall take. He will read them, and return them to you again *directly*. Accept and distribute my warmest wishes and regards to your own family, and to Mr. Franklin's.

I am always yours sincerely,

EDWARD SAVILLE.

LETTER XXIV.

MR. SAVILLE TO THE REV. MR. SELBY.

DEAR SIR,

A NEW incident has risen to your adventurers, which occasions much speculation, without forming any conclusion.—Samuel Elliott avows a passion for Miss Freewill.—This fair lady has been under great uneasiness of mind ever since she recovered her liberty, without being able to determine what use to make of it.—Mrs. Barclay most kindly offered to write to her guardian, and to represent all the circumstances of her late excursion in the most favourable light: and also to mention her objections to being at Mr.

Holden's; and desire him to permit her to choose a proper family for a young lady of Miss Freewill's fortune to reside in.

This lady's mediation is accepted most thankfully; she will write in her own name, and expect an answer.

I have spent an evening with honest Mr. Barton, at Mrs. Searle's.—He managed admirably with his employers, and they actually believe him innocent of the ladies' escape. Hardy and Smith went and released Mrs. Catherine as soon as we were set off; they made a terrible report of an army of men, who came upon them, and forcibly carried off the ladies; that Elliott was bribed to take part with them; but for their parts they were incorruptible, and remained true to their own Master Barton. I ordered Mr. Barton to reward their fidelity, and all who were engaged in our service. Lord S—— was terribly mortified and grieved; but Mr. Clayton behaved like a madman.—Capt. Dunton knows nothing to the contrary of our friend Barton's report; so the truth is known only to our select friends.

After this affair was discussed, Mr. Barton besought my influence with Mrs. Jones, to hasten the day of his happiness. He had served me too well, not to engage my services in return. I urged her to make an honest man happy, and secure a comfortable establishment for herself.

At length she promised to give her hand to Mr. Barton one day this month.—I am to be at the wedding.—Her father will be there also.—Mrs. Searle will be married on the same day to a friend of Mr. Barton's. Their shop is to be transferred to the widow of another sailor, who is in low circumstances; and these worthy seamen give the stock in trade to her, for her outset.

Our dear Sophia has recovered her looks and her spirits. With every sentiment of friendship and affection,

I am, dear Sir, yours, faithfully,

EDWARD SAVILLE.

LETTER XXV.

MRS. BENNET TO MISS MELCOMBE.

WITH all the warmth and sincerity of maternal affection, I congratulate the child of my heart on her escape from her late danger, and on the recovery of her liberty; I cannot wish to deprive her of it so soon.—Enjoy it, my child, under the restraints of virtue and of prudence; which I trust you will always retain, for your bosom friends and companions. Mrs. Barclay is a proper person to introduce you to such places and persons as you would wish to know; she is

polite, sensible, and friendly; and will have pleasure in performing the office of *Chaperon* to the sister and friend of Mrs. Selby.

We are all under high obligations to Mr. Saville and Mr. Elliott. I leave our acknowledgements in your hands, my Sophia; I am certain they will have an additional value to Mr. Saville; his merit with you is doubtless increased by his services; you will let me know when you choose I should acquaint your father with his generous offer, and ask his consent to your engagement. I shall be happy to serve you under the protection of a man worthy of you: such a man I believe Mr. Saville to be; but you must judge for yourself in this great article of life.

Your companion shall be welcome to me, for as long as you please; my advice is at her service whenever she desires it.

My daughter Selby writes, so I shall only briefly say what is necessary; she desires I will not anticipate her thoughts.

God bless my dear child! and direct her steps in the paths of virtue and happiness! prays her tender parent,

MARIA BENNET.

LETTER XXVI.

MRS. SELBY TO MISS MELCOMBE.

MY DEAR SOPHIA,

I DO most seriously rejoice with you upon your happy deliverance; and when I consider what might have happened, I shudder at the danger, and unite with my mother in returning thanks to heaven for your escape.

After all flights of fancy, I wish your adventures may end in the usual way, matrimony and quietness. A country life, three fourths of the year at least; and one more wish—Oh, that you may settle in this neighbourhood! for how shall I bear to be separated from my Sophia for life!

My dear Selby is, if possible, more attentive to me since our marriage than before. He tells me he ought to make your absence as easy to me as possible, and to wean me from the expectation of seeing you always near me, to prepare me for our future separation. I put on airs of bravery; but my heart will be heard in its turn; it feels the absence of my Sophia, and dreads the continuation of it. I have uttered a wish to my Selby, that a way might be found to fix you near us. He answers me mysteriously;

he even bids me hope it may not be impossible: but he will not explain this hope, till it appears nearer its accomplishment. I embrace it, however, in its present state; and build delightful expectations upon it.

It would give me too much pain, were I to tell you all that we suffered, during our uncertainty of your safety. My dear mother does not suffer half her tenderness for us to appear, unless in cases of emergency; we wished, we hoped, we prayed for you, incessantly. Our prayers were heard. The generous and amiable Saville did not lose a minute in informing us of every step he took, and every ray of hope that he obtained; he wrote the most minute particulars to Mr. Selby; he knew that every thing concerning you, must be interesting. I give Mr. Saville all my interest with you, in return for his goodness to us; I will second his wishes to obtain a short day of you: but take notice, I have not yet told him so. But we must see you here shortly: we must have your wedding celebrated here; and we will keep you with us as long as we have influence with you. How I long to return your good offices on my wedding-day!

Mr. Collins and Dolly Grove go on swimmingly. I reckon their nuptials may be celebrated at the same time as yours. Dolly

suffered much for you, and rejoiced with us at your deliverance. She sends her respects and love to you. Mr. and Mrs. Franklin send their best regards to you: they excuse Mr. Saville's writing to them, as they suppose his attendance upon your ladyship, employs all the hours he can spare from duty and business. My mother speaks for herself; I for myself and my husband; as Sophia's tenderest friends and relatives. Adieu, my dear sister and friend.

I am ever yours,

ANNA MARIA SELBY.

LETTER XXVII.

MR. SAVILLE TO THE REV. MR. SELBY.

I SHALL continue my narrative to you, my dear Sir; and through you, to Mr. Johnson and Mr. Franklin. My time is employed at present in the ladies' service.

I therefore acquaint you all, that I have had an interview with Mr. Munden; which passed in passion and resentment on his part, with intrepidity and resolution on mine.

I desired him to settle his account with my attorney. He reproached me with ingratitude to himself, insolence to Lady Belmour, treachery to Clayton, and impertinence to Lord S——.

I defended myself against the first charge; and as to the opinion of Lady Belmour and her friends, I was perfectly indifferent.—What did I propose doing? He heard I was going to be married to a girl of family, but no fortune.—If I was, I had a right to please myself; was my answer.—Then I had nothing to expect from him. I give up every expectation upon you, Sir; and every kind of dependence on you.—He swore cursed, and abused me. I made him a low bow, and retired from a volley of execrations. He called me back; but I ran out of the house, and shall not go there again presently.

Miss Melcombe has seen the public streets and buildings that are best worth notice; these are our morning promenades: our evenings are spent in visiting with Mrs. Barclay, or else at public places. I leave it to Sophia to speak of them; an engagement of this kind obliges me to conclude this hastily. I am ever yours faithfully,

EDWARD SAVILLE.

LETTER XXVIII.

MISS MELCOMBE TO MRS. SELBY.

ACCEPT my heart's acknowledgments, my dear mamma and sister, for your kind pacquet just received. This busy, hurrying, yet idle place, carries my time away I can hardly tell how; but

I forego every trifling business or engagement, and devote this evening to you and friendship.

Mrs. Barclay has a very large acquaintance, among which are those of all the denominations; and sometimes there is a mixture of these three characters in the same person. Your people of fashion are the most inexplicable to me, and the least agreeable. They seem to me like people that are acting a part upon a stage; they disclaim and conceal what is natural to them, and assume a character that is not so; the whim of the day, is their mirror of perfection; by that they regulate their dress, their airs and graces, nay, even their phrases; and as this whim is subject to continual alteration, so their affectation varies likewise; and in the course of one year, nay, I am told in less time, it shifts its course, and obliges its followers to resemble the fane upon our steeple, driven to and fro by every wind of fashion.

I have sometimes thought myself in a foreign country. Surely, said I, these cannot be English men and women; women with the boldness and intrepidity of men, and men with the softness and effeminacy of women; both sexes embellished with such extravagance of dress and manners, as if they were vying with each other which should leave nature at the greatest distance: yet

the eye which is shocked at this appearance at first, by degrees becomes familiarized to it.

Thus much may serve for my opinion of fashion, and its votaries in general: if I can find leisure, perhaps I may use my pen or my pencil, to give you a sketch or two of particular subjects. You know I sometimes catch a flying likeness; but you will think them caricaturas, not realities.

Miss Freewill has had a letter from her guardian, inclosed in one to Mrs. Barclay.—The old wretch declaims in low and common-place language, against the honour and utility of our sex. He is sorry he has any thing to do with us. He requires poor Fanny to return to Mr. Holden's; and to stay there till she comes of age, which is almost three years. What effect his mandate will have, I know not; perhaps it may drive her to take the very step he thinks to prevent. She declares with great spirit, that she will never return to Holden's. You have given your opinion on Elliott's side; I will shew it to Fanny; but the men shall not know it: who would have thought that my Anna would have spoken in favour of an elopement: nay, would have advised a second? In your ear let me whisper, that I am persuaded, if she had any hopes of Mr. Saville, she would encourage no other lover; she sees clearly that his affections are engaged, and she

actually wants a protector. Elliott is an honest worthy young man, and has an ardent passion for her. She is not very delicate in her notions or sentiments. She has it in her power to make Elliott's fortune. Hers was originally thirty thousand pounds; and there will be eight years minority to account for, and a large sum in consequence to add to the principal.

I don't know whether to wish this match to take place or not; but I wish that may happen, which will be best for them both.

Mr. Saville's behaviour is unexceptionable; under this conduct I can see that he relies upon my gratitude, to make him a dearer interest in my regard; he seems more at ease with me, and yet I cannot complain that he encroaches upon my privileges. Shall I tell you a weakness of my foolish heart? Yes. I will not conceal one thought of it from my dearest friends. I have consented to prolong my stay in London, in order to indulge a foolish curiosity. I wish, I long to see my father! to see my brothers and sisters; to see any part of the family. My heart beats towards them, and an involuntary tear starts into my eye, whenever I think on them. I vainly wish that some accident may throw me in their way, or them into mine.

I desired Mr. Saville to show me the part of the town where they live; it is called Grosvenor-

square; I went and walked round it. Mr. Saville indulged me; I looked at the outside of the house, till I worked my passions into a fit of tears. I wanted to see them go out, or come in; I confessed my weakness to Mr. Saville, and he kindly pitied and allowed for me; nay, he said, he adored me for it. Oh could I present Mr. Saville to my father! could I tell him what he has done for me! he would then give mé to him properly, and I should not come to him as an alien to my family; one of a fortune so inferior to what he may expect, that I should be under too much obligation for my peace. You will say I have a proud heart. I fear it is so; but this is my whole ambition. Mr. Saville's estate is eighteen hundred a year; his father had mortgaged a part of it; but his minority will have more than discharged the debt. Mr. Munden has told him so.—He has been a good guardian, in respect to his interest; though his morals are very exceptionable, and he might have ruined those of his ward. The more I know of Mr. Saville, the more I esteem him; he has an excellent heart, and as good a judgment; in short, if I could give him my hand upon equal terms, I should be ready to do it; but my proud heart relucts against it in my present situation, and my fancy suggests a hope that I may one day give it him with my father's approbation, and

even have our nuptials honoured by his presence.

Mrs. Barclay is a very agreeable woman, yet not quite what I should expect from her years and situation. She is fond of company and amusements; and has not those resources in herself that my mamma has in herself, and endeavours to give her children. Perhaps I might see a great many more ladies, before I saw one like my mamma. Perhaps I may be too severe in my opinion of Mrs. Barclay, but my dear friends will excuse the unformed judgment of their Sophia.

Mrs. Barclay told me "she lost her first lover in a voyage to India.—With him (said she) were buried all the refined and tender emotions of my heart: I never felt the like, for any man since. About two years after, an advantageous match was proposed to me; my friends enlarged upon the comforts included in such an establishment.

"I pleaded my indifference; they made use of it as an argument to induce me to accept it. Since all men are indifferent to you, why not accept our friend? You have no bias against him, and every other argument is in his favour. Thus urged, I married Mr. Barclay, who was very fond of me for a few months, which I confess was not the happiest period of my married

state; afterwards we sunk into a calm and tranquil state of polite indifference; he followed his amusements, I mine; we both loved company, and always agreed in material points.

"We lived twenty-five years together, without one quarrel. He was of an easy temper; mine was not bad. We always behaved with the utmost politeness to each other; and when he died, he left me the greatest part of his fortune.

"Ever since I have lived in the manner the most agreeable to me. I love a town life—society—amusement. I have always taken care to avoid excesses of every kind; I live within my fortune; enjoy the company of my friends; and I believe am as happy as most people in the general lot of humanity. I am contented with my situation, and that is as much as I expect, and, to say truth, more than most of those I am acquainted with can say."

How do you like *Marriage Alamode*, my Anna?—I do not find it much to my taste; and yet this is one of the better kind; for I hear such stories of married people of fashion, as I should blush to repeat. They make no more of talking of *crim. con.* in common conversation, than of the most ordinary occurrences of the day.—Continue, my dear friends, your wishes and prayers for me; I have found their good

effects in my past escape, and hope to do so in my future conduct and situation.

Accept and distribute my love and good wishes among my good friends and neighbours around you; always reserving the best part for your own family; my nearest and dearest friends.

I am always yours most affectionately,

SOPHIA MELCOMBE.

LETTER XXIX.

THE REVEREND MR. SELBY TO EDWARD SAVILLE, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

YOU have obliged us extremely by your communications. The ladies present their acknowledgments for the pacquet just received, containing a short letter from you, and a long one from Sophia; they will reply to hers, and I am very desirous of making a return in your own way, by telling you some news from this corner, in which I think you will take a share in the satisfaction we propose to ourselves.

Our friend John Franklin and myself have been ever since the late exploit of Lord S—— and Mr. Clayton, contriving to rid our neighbourhood of your Lady Calypso, as you are

pleased to call her. The seduction of farmer Hobson's daughter, one of my own flock, authorizes me to use active measures, in order to preserve the peace and the morals of my own parish.

Franklin and I have made strict inquiries into her conduct and her fortune; and what resources she has to support the great expence she lives at: we find that she is deeply in arrears with all the people she employs. We design to draw up an army of bills in battle array against her, and she must either pay them, or be arrested, or fly the country. Most of the gentry you left there, have gone away; they are grown tired of the country, and sigh for the town and its various pleasures and dissipations. We have begun our attack, by sending in the bills, and desiring her to appoint a time to discharge them; if she refuses this, or if she is saucy, woe be to her!

You are very happy in serving the ladies, and your attentions are not ineffectual. I dare not for my life tell tales out of school; I therefore only give a hint, that we are all your firm friends here; and when Sophia returns to us, we shall speak a few words in your behalf that may be effectual to the completion of your wishes; in the mean time go on in your own way; I am convinced that with women worth obtaining, delicacy, silent assiduities, and speaking silence, is the surest method of paying court to them.

In regard to Elliott's passion, I know not what to say; it is not certain what kind of character his Dulcinea may be; she is young and giddy, he is too young to form her manners, his own are yet unformed. Elliott must judge for himself.

Mr. Franklin writes to his kinsman; he and his wife wish him to succeed; they will offer to lend him money upon lawful interest, to be repaid hereafter; they are afraid the young couple should fall into bad hands, and be ruined.

Andrew Collins and Dolly Grove are engaged to each other; I have given the young man some useful advice, and he takes it properly; he will discharge the ensigns of foppery, and become an useful member of society.

In expectation of the *denouement* of your history, I remain

Your faithful friend and servant,

G. SELBY.

LETTER XXX.

MR. J. FRANKLIN TO MR. S. ELLIOTT.

DEAR SAM,

I REJOICE to hear of your health, safety, and success; and particularly of the prospect before you. May your attack be successful, and the

ship a lawful prize! But, my dear lad, be cautious how you proceed; and above all things, how you take up money upon interest. There are a kind of men, whose business it is to lend money upon usury; many unthinking young men have ruined their fortunes before they came to the possession of them.

If you marry directly, you must have money for your outset; but how must it be raised? Listen to me! I will lend you a thousand pounds upon your bond; to carry lawful interest, and no more. Take care how you spend it; persuade your lady to come and board with us here, or else in some sober family in a country town. London will swallow you up at a mouthful; you must not live there.

I inclose a letter to Mr. Samuel Browning, your great uncle and godfather; as soon as the fair lady has given you her promise, but not before, carry this letter yourself to him at Peckham; tell him your story at the same time, and mention your wants for the *present moment*, though you are certain of a handsome fortune in a few years. I hope he will make you a handsome present. As to your father, I know he can do nothing for you; his numerous family call upon him for all that he can spare for their establishment in life. Say nothing to him till all is over; I will excuse you to him.

Do not let this affair hang long in suspense, but finish it quickly one way or other. Carry her to Scotland; and, as soon as you are fairly *spliced*, as you would call it, bring your wife hither; put her to school to Mrs. Bennet and Mrs. Franklin, and let her learn the duties of a wife; and to find her own happiness, in that of her husband and family.

I inclose this in Mr. Selby's cover to Mr. Saville. I do not write to him till he does to me. I am the rather satisfied, because he treats Mr. Johnson, whom he calls his *Mentor*, the same.

I inclose a bank-note for twenty pounds, lest you should want cash for common expences.

Do you intend to continue in the service, or will you strike your name off the list? I advise nothing on this head; satisfy yourself, or perhaps your *wife*, who will then have a right to determine on this point for you.

Your cousin sends you her best wishes; she and the dear babes are well and happy. I shall take every opportunity to approve myself your faithful friend and kinsman.

JOHN FRANKLIN.

LETTER XXXI.

MR. ELLIOTT TO MR. FRANKLIN.

MY DEAR FRANKLIN,

It is the pride and glory of my life to have so generous a friend and kinsman as yourself. I accept your kindness with all my heart. I thank you for your counsel, and I will sail under your command, till you think me able to manage my own ship on the ocean of life. My little frigate has led me a brisk chase: she is a girl of spirit, and wants a good deal of firing to make her bring to; but she lowers her flag, my boy, and surrenders to me. Huzza, friends! the victory is mine—Huzza!—I proposed going full sail to Scotland; but Mrs. Barclay, who is in all our secrets, and who is as clever a woman as ever you knew, gave us better advice, as you shall hear.—Why should you go so long a journey, when you can get married just as well here, and as privately too? Let the banns be published in my parish-church; nobody there knows who Samuel Elliott, single man, and Frances Free-will, single woman, are; it will be much less trouble and expence, and there will be very little time lost, and every thing may be done in the snug way, without any suspicion till all is over.

Mr. Saville is my friend, and will be my bondsman. He has offered me his purse; he suffers me to be at no kind of expence.

I observe what you say respecting frugality. I would not injure my wife and her children, by spending their money upon my own pleasures, for the empire of the sea! I will be her guard, her protector, and her steward; but never could I bear the thought of wasting her property: nay, I have too much spirit to be maintained at her expence; I will not turn my back upon my profession; my country has need of the service of all her children; I will not forsake her in the time of danger, which is also a time of glory for seamen. My Fanny is a noble girl, she does not require it of me.

Well, but we have settled every thing. Mrs. Barclay has sent a bill to be published in the church on Sunday. On Monday Mr. Saville will have the goodness to give me his company to my godfather's at Peckham, and he will speak in my favour to him, which will support my application.

Mr. Saville sends his love to you; he says he will redeem your good opinion, and spend some time in your neighbourhood, as soon as we have finished our business. Both he and Miss Melcombe will be present at our marriage: I see no reason why their own, might not be celebrated

at the same time; but I do not think he is half so brisk in his courtship as I am. My best love and gratitude attend yourself and family. My respectful compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Selby, and Mrs. Bennet.

I am, my dear coufin,

Your most obliged,

and affectionate kinsman,

SAMUEL ELLIOTT.

P. S. I thank you heartily for the twenty pound note. It is welcome to me, for I must be new-rigged for my new expedition.

LETTER XXXII.

MISS MELCOMBE TO MRS. SELBY.

I MAKE no doubt that the contents of Mr. Elliott's letter will soon transpire to the Parsonage. He has gained the lady. Mr. Saville loves him with fraternal affection; he calls him his brother and friend; he is gone with him to Peckham, to confirm his application to his godfather.

I did not intend to stir abroad till their return; but Mrs. Barclay has engaged us in a party to the play to-night. Fanny Freewill seems more easy in her mind, since she has taken her resolution; she says she saw it was impos-

sible she could have a proper home but her own, or any protector but an husband.

Monday Evening.

Oh, my dearest Anna! what an adventure! My heart is in great agitation; hope, fear, and affection, take the rule of it in turn. It is in vain to go to bed; I can have no rest till my mind is more composed.

When we came to the theatre, we seated ourselves in a box; the first row of which was taken and kept by a genteel servant. In the midst of the first act, two gentlemen came in, and seated themselves before us: one seemed between thirty and forty, the other a very young man, or rather a youth, of a most amiable countenance, and genteel deportment.

After the act was over, he turned towards us, looked earnesly at me, and soon after addressed me; asked me, how I liked the play, and said many polite and gallant things to me.—I told him I could not yet form my judgment of it; but that I had rather listen to the opinion of others, than give my own.—He chatted upon several points; at length he begged me to accept a seat upon his row. I excused myself, saying, I could not leave my company. Upon which, he offered the whole seat to Mrs. Barclay and her company, and offered to take theirs for himself and friend; she acknowledged his politeness, but declined accept-

ing it. The gentleman, his companion, seemed to think him too attentive to us, and gave him a look of disapprobation. The youth spoke to him in a low voice; he answered in the same; but, being *interested*, I wished to catch a word or two. I heard him say, My Lord, I don't disapprove your taste, she looks truly amiable. I blushed deeply, from a consciousness of hearing what was not designed for my ear. Luckily the curtain drew up, and called for the attention of us all. I followed the actors with my eyes and ears; but yet my heart gave me two or three items of another kind. This amiable youth, is called my Lord! What Lord can it be?—What is that to me?—By degrees, this inward monitor, drew my attention from the stage. I looked at my Lord attentively. If he should be —? Foolish suggestion!—but as soon as it gained admittance, it engrossed every thought, and every wish.—I was soon put out of suspense; a young gentleman in the pit called to him, My Lord B——, are the ladies here to-night? He answered, No; they were prevented coming.

My heart leaped in my bosom. It is my brother, said I.—I was so much affected, that I was obliged to hold my fan before my face.

The third act I know very little about, for my heart fluttered incessantly, and the tear started in my eye. I was obliged to make strong

efforts to conceal my emotions. Lord B—— asked me several questions; but what sort of answers I made, I know not. I was unhinged, and could attend to nothing but my own sensations.

The library scene commanded my attention. Lord B—— had seen it before; but he observed my looks, and asked my opinion; I answered, It is interesting; but it is such a picture of human nature, as I do not wish to see.

In the interval between the fourth and fifth act, we had again a short conference, and I grew more and more pleased with him; my heart yearned to call him its brother.

While Lord B—— was speaking to the gentleman, who as Mrs. Barclay supposes was his governor, I cast my eyes towards the upper boxes, and there whom should I see, but my late persecutor Lord S——! At sight of him, I felt an emotion of a very different kind; my spirits failed me, my heart sunk, and I was ready to faint; I laid my hand upon Miss Freewill's, who sat next. I exclaimed, Look, look, there he is!—Who is there? said she. What is the matter?—I still called out, Look there! It is Lord S——.—Where? said she.—I pointed with my fan; she was alarmed, but not so much as I was. She told Mrs. Barclay.—Cannot we go home? said I.—No, said Mrs. Barclay, you

must stay till my servant comes.—Miss Freewill held the salts to my nose; my head turned round.—Lord B—— turned his head, and saw me pale and fainting. What is the matter with the lady? said he.—Mrs. Barclay answered, that I was not well; that the heat of the house overcame me.—I feared so, said he, for I have observed her change colour several times in the course of the evening.—Lord B—— went out of the box; he enquired for Mrs. Barclay's servant, or his own; and he ordered that whichever came first should attend him; in the mean time Mrs. Barclay comforted and encouraged me.—Exert yourself, my dear, said she; try to get the better of this shock. If you go out of the house, it will make a bustle, and draw the attention of the man you most fear; at present he does not observe us; his attentions are directed to the lady with him. Take courage, my love! and wait with patience till our servant comes; as soon as the coach is ready, I will attend you home.—I tried to get the better of myself; I changed places with the lady behind me; I retired from observation as much as possible; Miss Freewill changed her place likewise. Lord B—— returned, and told us what he had ordered; and Mrs. Barclay paid my acknowledgments, for I was too much discomposed to pay attention to any thing.

In the midst of the farce, while the audience were attentive to the feats of Harlequin Fortunatus, Lord B——'s servant came; he offered his coach to Mrs. Barclay and her company. She was going to decline it; but I said, Do, for God's sake, let me go!—The gentleman with Lord B—— said, Do you mean to go *too*?—I do, said my Lord; but I will return to you directly.

He offered me his hand; my macaroni, Mr. Finnet, offered his to Miss Freewill; another gentleman attended Mrs. Barclay; and we went away directly, to my infinite joy.

Lord B—— attended us home; he behaved with the utmost delicacy of attention towards me. When we got home, he stepped out, and handed me into the parlour: he thanked Mrs. Barclay for the honour she had done him, in accepting so trifling a service; he hoped she would permit him to call again to enquire after the lady's health; at present he would not intrude, as he believed I wanted rest after my fatigue.

He then very politely withdrew, and left us all high in his praises. I then had leisure to recollect myself; I begged pardon for giving them so much trouble, and said I should not desire to go to the play again in haste.

We sat and chatted till twelve o'clock, and

then retired to our respective apartments; but finding myself in no disposition to sleep, I resolved to write down my adventures of the evening. I will now go and solicit sleep to visit my couch, and wish that it may present to my mind's eye, the image of my amiable brother.

Tuesday Morning. My wish was answered, I have dreamed of my father, my brother, and all the family; I have been received into their arms, and acknowledged for their relation. Oh that these ideas may be realised!

Tuesday Evening. Lord B—— has been here to enquire after my health; he spent an agreeable hour. He was extremely polite to my friends, but he paid *me* very particular attentions.

The rest of our party have called or sent to know how I do. We expect our knights-errant back to-morrow; I long to acquaint them with my adventure, and to consult Mr. Saville about the use I may make of Lord B——'s acquaintance; I look upon it as the crisis of my connection with my father's family.

Wednesday. Our two friends are returned safe, well, and happy. Mr. Elliott has been kindly received and entertained by his relation. He made Mr. Elliott a present of bank-notes for five hundred pounds. The young man desired his godfather to take the charge of settling the lady's fortune upon her in the best manner,

as soon as it shall be in her power. Miss Freewill acknowledged his honour, and said, She would, without scruple, trust her fortune to his protection, with her person.

Mr. Saville took me aside, and, with a supplicating look, asked me if he was to have the mortification of seeing his friend made happy, without advancing a step towards his own felicity.

I waved the reply, and told him something had happened that might perhaps lead to the subject hereafter. I wish to consult you as my assured friend, Sir.—You honour me, Madam, by your commands!—I then told him my adventure at the play, and the visit that followed it. He said, If it gave me pleasure, he would claim a share of it; but as my father had shewn such a steady resolution not to acknowledge me, he thought it was more likely to displease him, than to be of any service to me.—Suffer me, oh Sophia! to say one word in my own behalf! If you were actually married to a man of good character and competent fortune, I think it far more likely that the Earl would take proper notice of you, than while you are single, and seem to stand in need of his protection. Let me avail myself of this occasion to urge you to be mine; it is with pain that I have so long suppressed the dictates of my heart. I have been implicit

in my obedience to your commands; I have stood by, and seen others who set out after me in the race, reach the goal of happiness before me. And now I urge for your own sake, as well as mine; cruel and indifferent as you are to me!

I felt myself affected at this reproach. I hesitated to answer him.—Unjust and ungrateful! said I; it is *for your* sake, as much as *my own*, that I wish to be acknowledged for what I am. —Is it indeed? said he, in the accent of joy; then I *am* ungrateful. Oh, my Sophia, forgive me, and accept my acknowledgements! It is the first glimpse of hope you have bestowed upon me for a long time: confirm it to me, my angel!—I cannot, said I, consent to be yours, till I have the hope that my father will accept the office of one to me. But I am sensible of your merit; I believe your affection for me is true and sincere; and I can never forget my obligation to you.—Speak not of obligation, said he; love acquits all obligation; it is the only reward of a faithful heart. Give me then love for love, and I shall be laid under everlasting obligation to my adored Sophia.

Our conversation grew too tender; I returned to the former subject.—Suffer me, Mr. Saville, to wait the event of this new adventure. I wish to make Lord B—— my friend; his very parti-

gular attention to me, may perhaps serve me as an excuse for coming to an explanation with him. I am almost tempted to hazard one, but I will do nothing rashly; if I should own myself his sister, I will recommend you to him as a brother; let this satisfy you for the present.—It shall satisfy me, Madam; I will wait your pleasure: but let me assure you, not with any view to Lord D——'s favour towards you, or still less with any other expectations from him.

I finished our conversation, and returned to company; but he seemed desirous to detain me longer.

Mr. Elliott is making a pacquet to send to Mr. Franklin; I shall send this under the same inclosure. Let me hear from my dear friends at S——; every thing from them will be interesting to me.

My heart's best love, wishes, and prayers, attend you all!

I am yours always and equally,

SOPHIA MELCOMBE.

LETTER XXXIII.

MR. SELBY TO EDWARD SAVILLE, ESQ.

I AM delighted with the progress of your adventures. I am as happy as humanity is capable

of; but our quiet course of life furnishes no incident at present.

Our attack goes on hopefully. Your lady governess is closely besieged, she cannot stir out of doors; she promises largely, but performs nothing. A day is set for the payment of her debts; if she fails, she knows the consequence.

Sophia is pursuing a scheme of her own, I find; for my part I do not expect much from it: however, it will either be the means of obliging her father to acknowledge her, or it will put an end to her expectations from that proud family; either way it will make her mind easy about them. Mr. Johnson has returned my papers, with a polite note of acknowledgement, and a letter which he desires me to forward to you.

After Elliott's wedding is over, I shall ask a question about your returning to us; till then, I use my patience, and am satisfied by hearing of your proceedings.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours sincerely and affectionately,

G. SELBY.

LETTER XXXIV.

MR. JOHNSON TO EDWARD SAVILLE, ESQ.

I THANK you, my dear Sir, for the latest marks of your attention. A young man engaged in

the most interesting pursuit of his life, seldom thinks at all of distant friends; especially of those advanced in years, and who assume the office of *Monitors*.

Every attention, under these circumstances, is of ten-fold value. I esteem it as such, and as the best proof that my counsels have been well received, and well remembered. I am infinitely obliged by the communication of the memoirs of the Bennet family; I remember the writer at College, he was a virtuous and amiable man; I loved him living, and I venerate his memory. These memoirs are as interesting to you, as to any part of his family. I look upon you as a member of it, by your engagement to the amiable Sophia. I hope your residence in London will not be much longer; the air of that place is not favourable to simplicity of manners, nor yet to virtuous love.

Let me advise you, and do you advise young Elliott, to remove from this place the fair partners of your hearts; the poison of it, works insensibly upon you and them; carry them where they may breathe the purer air of virtue and simplicity.

I wish to taste with you the sweets of the village of S——. I love, I revere the Parsonage-house, both for its late and present possessors; I must through you be acquainted with Mr.

Selby, his honoured mother, and amiable wife. My heart warms within me when I think on the history of these worthies; and all vanity and parade shrink to nothing in the comparison.

The utmost happiness that human nature is capable of, is to be found in domestic life; those who seek it any where else will seek in vain; and those who cultivate social and domestic virtues, will not fail to find enough to sweeten all the cares and misfortunes to which this transitory state is liable.

When you are settled in this terrestrial Paradise, I will visit you, and rejoice in your happiness. For the hastening of this period, you have the wishes, affections, and prayers, of

Your faithful friend and servant,

JARVIS JOHNSON.

LETTER XXXV.

MISS MERCOMBE TO MRS. SELBY.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND SISTER,

I HAVE brought myself into difficulties which increase upon me every day. Lord B—— calls here often; he wishes to be alone with me; he absolutely makes love to me. Every time he comes, I am tempted to tell him how nearly I

am related to him; but a certain fear, which proceeds from both love and duty to my father, restrains me.

Mr. Saville and Lord B—— have met several times; he is jealous of my attention to Mr. Saville; he asks who he is; I answer, my friend, and one to whom I have great obligations.—Happy man! said Lord B——, how I envy him that distinction!

I have been pressed to go to more public places; but I beg to be excused. My situation is critical; I have a thousand fears, hopes, anxieties; I perceive that the crisis of my fate is approaching. I think much, sleep little, eat less, and am in no pleasant humour, though I have nothing that ought to make me unhappy. I want to find out a way to come to an explanation with Lord B——. Amiable youth! how sincere, how affecting his partiality to me! I must come to some determination—my resolution is taken—expect the result of it.

I will relate every particular of the interview with Lord B——. I have acquitted myself to my own satisfaction; my heart justifies me, and I hope my friends will approve of my behaviour. I was alone when Lord B—— came. I received him with ease and freedom, which encouraged him to declare a passion for me, a first passion, which he had never before felt for any woman.

—Suffer me, my Lord, to interrupt you; I am engaged to Mr. Saville. I should have told you so before, but had not a proper opportunity.—He lamented most pathetically his disappointment.—Hear me, my Lord; if I were not engaged, there are a thousand reasons why I could never listen to your Lordship upon this subject; if I were only to mention your extreme youth, it would be sufficient; you are two years younger than I, but that is one of the least: let me intreat you never to mention this subject more.—Cruel! said my Lord; why did you encourage my acquaintance, only in order to break my heart by your unkindness?—"I will account for it, if you will honour me with your attention. From the first moment I saw you I formed a wish to be acquainted with you; I found you so amiable, that my wish increased every time I saw you; my Lord, I aspire to your friendship; nay, it is necessary to my happiness; but, my Lord, it must be under the sanction of a father's permission. You are surprised; I must, in *some degree*, explain my pretension to the honour I now solicit. The earl of D——, your noble father, had a very intimate friendship with my parents; I have received great and singular obligations from him." My voice faltered here; I wept.—Good Heaven! said my Lord, you weep! Oh, that I were permitted to dry the tears that

fall from those speaking eyes!—He attempted to take my hand; I withdrew it.—This visit, my Lord, is the crisis of our friendship; I delayed it, because I was unwilling to forego your company; but your open declaration obliges me to hasten it: my Lord, you must tell your father, that you have accidentally met with a young woman whose name is Sophia Melcombe; that she admired your person and qualities, and took pleasure in your company; that, upon your soliciting a higher degree of friendship and intimacy, she thought it necessary to refer you to his Lordship; and that, if he will honour her with his permission to cultivate your friendship, she will esteem it one of the first blessings of her life.—My tears would accompany my words in spite of my resolution.—What is that I see? said Lord B——; such kindness, mingled with such cruelty! surely I am not hated!—No, my Lord, said I, you cannot be hated; you are formed to be loved and esteemed. I cannot explain myself any further; it depends upon your father to decide this point for us both; it depends upon him, whether I am permitted to see you any more. Will you have the goodness to give the Earl this piece of paper? I have written my name here, to prevent mistakes. This paper will acquaint him who and where I am; the rest I leave to his Lordship's decision. Adieu, my

Lord! if ever we meet again, I shall be justified in every part of my behaviour towards you; and, if we do not, my best wishes and prayers will ever attend you.—I rose upon this, and went out of the room in tears; and left the dear youth in the same situation.

He rung the bell soon after I went away. As soon as he was gone, Mr. Saville came into the dining-room; I had retired into my chamber, and as soon as I had in some measure conquered my emotions, I went to him; but they returned when I related to him all that had passed between me and Lord B——. Mr. Saville soothed and comforted me; he kindly allowed for my weakness of spirits, and led to *another* subject, his favourite *one*, which you will easily guess without further explanation. When Mrs. Barclay returned, she perceived the traces of the emotions of my heart in my countenance; I told her I had an interesting conversation with Lord B——, and probably we should see him no more. She rallied me, and so did Miss Freewill, upon it. They asked Mr. Saville, if he approved my regard for Lord B——; I do, indeed, ladies, said he; and will do every thing in my power to promote it.—Nay then, I am sure, we have nothing to do with it, said Miss Freewill.—My regard for Lord B——, said I, can never interfere with Mr. Saville's claim upon me.

I am tortured with impatience, to hear what effect Lord B——'s report will have upon his father. Good night to my dear sister and mother.

My fate now draws towards its crisis. I thank God my suspense will not last much longer! this day will put an end to it. Read here a note from the Earl of D——.

"Lord D—— presents his compliments to "Miss Sophia Melcombe; he will call upon her "at seven this evening, and desires she will re- "ceive him alone, without any witness to their "interview."

I will see how this father behaves to me, and act accordingly. Saville exerts all his abilities and influence to encourage me; I have told Mrs. Barclay that I am to receive a visit from a gentleman upon business of an interesting kind; and begged her permission to see him alone in the parlour. By no means, said she; the drawing-room is at your service.

If I can be so happy as to receive a father's blessing; to receive a husband from his hand; to embrace a brother; then will I think all my cares and anxieties amply recompensed.

The Earl of D—— was punctual to his appointment; he was shown into the drawing-room, while I was pouring out my heart before

my Supreme Benefactor, and imploring his blessing upon my hopes and wishes. When I thought myself duly prepared to meet my father, I went down to him with trembling limbs and faltering voice; but with a heart strengthened by a firm reliance upon Heaven. My Lord was waiting for me; he looked impatient for the interview. I courtesied very low, and was silent. He advanced towards me; he took both my hands in his own; he looked earnestly in my face a minute, and then saluted me tenderly. We were both silent. After a pause of some minutes, he seemed to recollect himself.—Sophia Melcombe, what brings you to London?

This address raised my spirits. I answered, My Lord, I did not come hither of my own accord; I was brought by compulsion.—How is that? said he; who could compel you.—If your Lordship will have patience to hear the story, I will tell you every particular.—Sit down, my child, said he; I am ready and willing to hear you.—My heart was softened by the kindness of his expression; but I had it be stout, and not give way to its own weakness. I told him first, the character and situation of Lady Belmour; her endeavours to corrupt Mr. Saville's virtue; his leaving her house, and coming to Mr. Franklin's; his introduction to Mr. Selby's acquaintance, to all the Bennet family, and to me; the

resentment and threatened revenge upon him; Lord S—— and Mr. Clayton's request to him, to introduce them to me, and to Miss Freewill; his refusal to oblige them; Lord S—— and Mr. Clayton's scheme against us, and the execution of it; our treatment by them at Blackwall; Mr. Saville and Mr. Elliott's pursuit of us; their meeting with Mr. Barton, and his information of the designs of our persecutors to carry us to the continent, and there oblige us to marry them; the stratagems of our friends, and its success; Mrs. Barclay's kindness and hospitality, and her relation to Mr. Selby; her invitation to us to stay some time at her house, before our return home.

Lord D—— heard me with patient attention till I paused.—He said, My dear, I am satisfied of the truth of the relation you have given me. I am rejoiced at your escape, and for the friends you have made. I am obliged to them for their zeal and activity in your service. I will speak of that hereafter; but how came you acquainted with Lord B——?—I told him the story, exactly as it happened; and enlarged upon the pleasure I took in Lord B——'s company. I spoke highly of his accomplishments; and still higher of the goodness of his heart. I then told my Lord the particular notice he took of me; and at last his declaration of love to me; that I

found it necessary to appeal to his Lordship, as the person who ought to decide upon our regard for each other; and that I had done this, in a manner which I thought would be most agreeable to his Lordship, as he seemed to make a point of keeping his relation to me, a secret from all his family. My heart gradually softened at reciting these particulars, till at length I burst into tears, and remained silent.

Lord D—— drew his chair close to me; he embraced me.—My sweet child, why do you weep? you have acted with the greatest prudence: I applaud your behaviour, and I thank you for it!—"Oh, my Lord, it has cost me very dear! an hundred times I have been tempted to declare my relation to Lord B——; I longed to call him brother; to claim an interest in him; and must I forego the sweet hope of enjoying his friendship? must I be still an alien to him, though I know and love him, and though he loves me with equal affection?" I paused, and wept. —We will speak of this point hereafter, said my Lord; in the mean time, tell me, who are these gentlemen that were so much interested in the behalf of the two fair ladies, as to run all hazards to deliver them? give me some account of them.

I answered, "Mr. Saville is a young gentleman of good fortune and character. Mr. Elliott is a lieutenant in the navy; he is kinsman to Mr.

Franklin, our good friend and neighbour in the village of S——."—Well, said my Lord, but how are these two gentlemen attached to the two ladies; for I understand there must be some inducement to them, to engage so deeply in their cause? Do not blush, Sophia; but tell me which of them is your lover!—I looked down, and was confused; but recovering, I said, Miss Freewill is an heiress of large fortune, which she intends to bestow upon Mr. Elliott; who is an honest, brave, and worthy young man.—She is a girl of spirit, said my Lord, and I honour her for it; but what of the other pair of lovers?—Why, my Lord, the case is reversed with them; Sophia is a poor girl of small fortune, and belongs to nobody; and the generous Saville, offers to make her the partner of his heart and fortune.—Bravo! said my Lord; but Sophia has some spirit too I see, and can feel herself under too much obligation.—He smiled; but I looked very serious.—Come, my Sophia, open your heart to me: is Mr. Saville a favoured lover? if so, why have you not acquainted me with his pretensions before now?—"My Lord, you judge rightly of my spirit; I thought myself under too much obligation: Mrs. Bennet has urged me to apply to you by her hand; I was undetermined about it; but this last obligation to Mr. Saville, had almost overcome my reluctance to apply to

your Lordship, when accident threw me in the way of Lord B——; and his attention to me led me to wish——" I stopped.—To wish what, Sophia?—To wish, that I might present to him a brother and a friend worthy of him; and that I might claim a share in their friendship.

Good girl! said my Lord; you have answered all my questions hitherto, with a frankness uncommon in your sex; you shall not be a loser by it; you have shewn me a noble heart, and I will place it to account here: (laying his hand on his bosom.) I must ask one question more, Sophia, and look that your answer is with equal sincerity: does Mr. Saville know, whose daughter you are?—I now trembled, hesitated, and was silent.—Your silence answers me, said he: how dared you tell him my secret, without my permission?—I tried to speak, but was some moments before I could look up. I wept, and said, "At length, my Lord, Mr. Selby obtained Mrs. Bennet's permission, to acquaint Mr. Saville with my birth and parentage: they thought Mr. Saville's generous proposal, deserved that he should know to whom he had offered his hand and fortune.

I am answered, said my Lord; Every body is qualified to judge of my conduct, and to decide upon it against me; nobody appeals to me, nor suffers me to decide for them—it is well—I am

to contend with every body, and to submit to every one's reasons, against my own; but I shall think of every thing, and judge for myself.

My Lord walked about in great discomposure. We were silent for several minutes. At last I threw myself at his feet, embraced his knees, besought his forgiveness, and his fatherly advice and protection. While I was in this attitude, the door opened, and in rushed Lord B——. The Earl's features had relaxed; he looked softened; but upon his son's entrance, they resumed their sternness.—Impertinent boy! who sent for you?—Nobody, my Lord, said he; I came of my own accord. What have I done to deserve so severe a rebuke?—So, Sir, you too are come to sit in judgment upon your father? —Oh, not so! my Lord, but to humble myself at your feet; to implore your permission to visit this amiable young lady; to esteem, to love, to adore her. The youth threw himself down, and kneeled beside me. We both wept, and looked with supplicating eyes up to my Lord D——. He looked at us, till his heart relented; his lips quivered; his eyes overflowed.—There is no bearing this! said he; it calls me tyrant! can I spurn my kneeling children? Oh God, I cannot do it! Oh my son; my daughter.—Your daughter! said Lord B——; is it possible! can this dear lady be my sister!—I sobbed, and

fainted away. When I recovered, I found myself between my father and brother, with an arm of each round my waist.—Sophia, my dear child, said my father.—My tears now relieved me, and I spoke.—Oh, my father! my brother! do you *acknowledge* your Sophia?—It is all over, said Lord D——: two children have in one minute, overset the purpose of many years. My son, this lady is indeed your sister, and my *legitimate* daughter; since I am obliged to acknowledge her, I will not do it by halves.—I kneeled again; I blessed, thanked, and prayed for him. He raised and embraced me fervently.—Forgive me, my child! I have not done you justice, but I will endeavour to discharge my duty better hereafter.—We all three wept, and renewed our acknowledgements. It was half an hour before we recovered from our emotion. Then Lord D—— related briefly to his son, the circumstances of his first marriage.—"The punishment of my deceiving my father was severe, said he: it cost me the life of my wife."—I took notice of the application of his own case, to that of his son. He told him in general terms the loss of my mother, and my being put under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet.—"But I did not wholly desert my child, said he; I settled a sum of money on her; I entrusted her to the care of the best of men and of women.

" After I had performed my duties to my departed wife, I remembered those that I owed to a living father. After a year's mourning, I married the lady whom my father had chosen for me; which was your mother, my dear B——. I never had any reason to repent this engagement, nor I believe has Lady D——. When your sister was very young, I contracted her to the son of the worthy pair who took the charge of her; and by this tie, I intended to reward their tenderness to Sophia. When they grew up, the engagement was accepted by the parties concerned. Since that time, circumstances have varied greatly. Young Bennet died before his father, of the consequence of an unfortunate accident. Mr. Bennet survived but little more than a year; his daughter is married into another family: and thus, by a series of accidental circumstances, Sophia has stood in need of a protector. She has found one in Mr. Saville, who has offered her his heart, hand, and fortune, without knowing her birth and parentage. Was it not so, my dear? or did he know them, before he declared himself your lover?"

No, indeed, my Lord. Mr. Saville knew not my history, but in consequence of his offer to me.—Very well, my child; but I must in justice to myself assure you, that after what you have told me of this gentleman's gallant behaviour

towards you, I had resolved to pay my acknowledgments to him, and to make him some amends for it; and this, before I came to a resolution, to acknowledge you publicly for my daughter.—I thank your Lordship for this generous assurance, which I receive wholly as your bounty, and not as any claim of mine.—" My dear child, you have a lawful claim upon me; and I will never again give you cause to doubt my affection.

" But there is still a great difficulty in the way of my declaring you mine to all my family. Your mother, Sir, was proposed to me before I was married to Sophia's mother; I preferred her, and married her privately, to avoid the other lady.

" This is the true reason why I never had the courage to declare my first marriage; and this reason still subsists: for the date of Sophia's birth discovers the secret, which I have so long, and so carefully concealed from my wife.

" Now you, my *young* counsellors, who have driven me to this dilemma, try if you can help me out of it."

Oh, my Lord, said I, this generous frankness overwhelms me with love and gratitude! Permit me to answer it. I never wished to be a sharer in your rank and fortune; it was only your paternal affection, of which I so ardently desired to partake. It was the friendship of this

amiable youth, that I aspired to, without the least view to any other advantages.

My Lord, let the secret rest with those who already know it; honour Mr. Saville with your notice and favour; he will, I am sure, preserve it inviolably: I renounce all pretensions to your rank or fortune, only call me your child in private, and sometimes honour me with your presence. These, my Lord, are all the wishes and all the hopes of your Sophia.

Noble-minded Sophia! generous child! said Lord D——; I acknowledge your merit, and your dutiful resignation to me; but I must not be overcome by your generosity; the time for concealment is past, and I will now acknowledge my child in the face of the world, and shew them that I am proud of her.

Again I kneeled and kissed his hand. Lord B—— poured forth his acknowledgements for his father's goodness to me; he offered to give up a part of what his father designed for him, to add to his sister's fortune.—I refused it, and told him I was rich in his affections, and desired no other wealth.

Lord D—— applauded us both, and said, This evening had given him such pain and pleasure, that he could hardly sustain such strong emotions.

Let us, my children, finish this interesting subject. Pray, my dear, where is Mr. Saville?

My Lord, he lodges in this street, and is frequently here.—Perhaps he may be in the house at this moment—be so good to enquire!

I rang the bell, and the servant came in.—Is Mr. Saville below with the ladies?—He is, Madam.—Give my compliments, and desire him to walk up stairs. He withdrew.

Mr. Saville came immediately. I presented him to Lord D——, who took his hand, and embraced him.—Sir, I am desirous to acknowledge my obligations to you on this dear child's account; for her obligations are mine.—"Let me intreat you, my Lord, not to mention that word again. If you honour me with your notice and approbation; if this dear lady deigns to listen to my vows, to accept the services of my whole life, I shall think myself the happiest of men; I have nothing more to ask or wish."

Yes, you have still a further claim upon me, and for God's sake, Sir, do not think me so insensible, and hard-hearted, as to refuse to Sophia the rights and claims of so deserving a child! Let me have the pleasure of joining your hands. He did so; we both kneeled to him, and he blessed us. We returned his blessings with tears.—Sir, said he, I know your generous offer; but Sophia has a right to a much larger

portion of my fortune.—I beg, I beseech you, my Lord, not to mention it; it is Sophia that I love for her own sake; I want no addition to her fortune.

"A generous mind, Sir, should not accept all that a generous mind offers. I had my private reasons, Mr. Saville, for declining to own this young lady to my own family; they are now over-ruled; I acknowledge her to all the world." —Mr. Saville was overwhelmed with joy and gratitude, and could only express it in broken accents. As soon as the Earl quitted him, Lord B—— rushed into his arms; called him friend and brother, and hoped he would allow his claim. Saville was transported; he returned the dear youth's caresses, in accents of rapture. Lord D—— desired us to be composed, and listen to him.—There is one more person whom I wish to see, before I leave this house; it is the mistress of it.

I will fetch her this moment, said Mr. Saville. He flew down stairs. While he was gone, Lord D—— said, Does Mrs. Barclay also know my secret? Do not be frightened, Sophia; I will not be angry with you any more.

No, my Lord, said I; I never told it to any one, nor wished it known to any one, whom it did not immediately concern.—I am glad of it, for I shall have the pleasure to declare it my-

self.—When Mrs. Barclay came in, my Lord addressed her with respect and politeness. He thanked her for her kindness and hospitality to his child; whom he again acknowledged in the fullest manner. She expressed surprise and pleasure; she congratulated me, and all the company present.

It grows late.—He looked at his watch.—I must be going.—Mr. Saville, I shall expect to see you soon.—My Lord, I will do myself the honour to wait on you in a day or two. As soon as I can get the writings of my estates, I will deposit them in your Lordship's hands; and beg of you to direct the settlements.

I will accept the trust, Sir; and will deserve your confidence.

He then saluted me affectionately, and wished me good-night. He took leave of Mrs. Barclay. Lord B—— did the same. Mr. Saville attended them to the coach; and at his return, our compliments and rejoicings were renewed; Elliott and his Fanny joined us.

We sat together till a late hour, and at last parted reluctantly. I shall send this letter by the next post; I cannot confine my joy in my own heart, I must communicate it to my friends. Rejoice with me, oh my dear mamma Bennet! my heart's beloved sister Anna! my worthy brother Selby!

I am at this moment the happiest creature in the world. I pray God to make me grateful and worthy of it. I am ever yours.

SOPHIA.

LETTER XXXVI.

MR. SELBY TO EDWARD SAVILLE, ESQ.

JOY to Edward Saville, my chosen friend and brother!—Joy to the lovely Sophia, my Anna's sister and mine, and the daughter of my honoured mother, Mrs. Bennet!

We do nothing but gossip over our mutual congratulations, and repeat what we have said ten times before. You have no friends, no relations, that are more interested in your happiness, than those in the village of S——.

Now to business.—The lady Calypso has left her island. She decamped silently last Thursday at night, and has escaped the storm that threatened her. The bailiffs were to have entered the house in a day or two, but she has prevented them, which I am not sorry for. I wish she may find friends among her disciples that will help her out of her troubles. I do not wish her to suffer the least distress, only just enough to awaken her to remorse and repentance for her crimes.

And now, my dear friend, I will open to you a favourite project of mine; my wife and mother are in transports at the thoughts of it. If it be not agreeable to you, at least it will prove the sincerity of our affection to you and our dear Sophia.

You have expressed a wish to settle in our neighbourhood; it is now in your power to do so.—I will, if you authorize me, apply to the assignees of the late Mr. Playford, for the house Lady Belmour has just quitted. They will be glad to dispose of it for the remainder of the children's minority. Such of the goods as were hers, I can purchase of her creditors at a fair valuation; and in that case you will have a house ready to receive you and your lady, as soon as you shall choose to leave London. Pray let me know your pleasure as soon as possible, and I will not lose a minute in negociating this business for you.

And now I have provided an house for you, Sir; I will try to obtain one for Mr. Elliott and his lady. I will use my influence to persuade my mother to come and live wholly at the Parsonage, and let her house to Mr. Elliott. If both my schemes should succeed, I shall have drawn a circle of neighbours round me, that will form a rational society, and be the happiest spot of ground in the three kingdoms.

What says my friend to this scheme of life? has it any charms for him? or, has London given him a taste for her luxuries? and does Nature hold out her charms in vain? I fear I shall not have the pleasure to join your hands; if it could be, I should enjoy it most ardently; but if the father's presence will sanctify the union, I resign my wish cheerfully, and will rejoice at the transfer.

My wife writes to Sophia*; but I send my respects to my aunt by your hands, and hope, when you visit us, she will accompany you; and give me an opportunity of paying my acknowledgments to her, for her kindness and hospitality to my beloved friends.

I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully.

G. SELBY.

LETTER XXXVII.

MR. SAVILLE TO THE REV. MR. SELBY.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR letter demands an immediate answer. I thank you most fervently for your wishes in my behalf! I accept your good offices, and beg that you will immediately begin your treaty for

* This letter does not appear.

Lady Belmour's house. I am like one transported on the wings of imagination into the regions of Arcadia. Oh, my friend, words cannot express my sense of the delightful prospect you have opened to my view; hasten to realize it, and let me hasten to enjoy it!

I will give you some account of my interview with Mr. Munden. My last visit had left him in displeasure with me; and the traces of it, appeared on his countenance.—He said, What brings you here, Sir? I thought you had done with me, as I have with you.—I answered, Duty and gratitude bring me here, Sir. Mr. Brerewood informs me that I owe you many acknowledgments for your care of my fortune; that you have been a good guardian to me. My first care is to pay my grateful thanks to you. My second business is to inform you, that I am going to be married to a daughter of the earl of D——, and that I desire your permission to put the writings of my estates into his lordship's hands—Mr. Munden's features relaxed; he looked astonished.—You are going to be married to the earl of D——'s daughter!—" Sir, Mr. Brerewood shall be enabled to satisfy you of it."—Well, Sir, I did not mean to infer that I doubted your veracity.—But—but—to say truth, I did not think you had spirit enough to look up to such an alliance. The daughter of Lord D——! Yes, he has a

large estate and great interest, but then he has a large family too—But then his interest! Yes, he may be of great service to you. Well, Sir, the writings are in Mr. Moreton's hands, Chancery-lane; and you may have them when you please.

I begged him to give me an order to receive them from Mr. Moreton. He consented. He called for pen and ink, and wrote a note to Mr. Moreton. Then holding out his hand, Well, Edward, and so you wish to be friends with me? —I do, Sir, but not with any interested view.—Well then, give me thy hand.—I did so—"Upon my soul, Edward, thou art improved! Love makes a man. I see it plainly. If you will acquaint me with your proceedings—why—you shall not repent it—that is all."

I told him I would soon wait on him again; but that at this time I was in haste. I took my leave, and hastened to Chancery-lane; saw the writings safe in Mr. Brerewood's hands; and then hastened away to Southwark to the wedding. The ceremony was over before I arrived; and I excused myself for not being present, being engaged in preparation for business of the same kind. A large company of the friends of the new-married pair were present. Mr. Jones was there; his daughter presented him to me; he thanked me for the services I had rendered

to his daughter Susan. I stopped him short, and said, I had more than equal obligation to her. The bride looked very serious; but the company were lively, and dispelled her melancholy, of which they knew not the cause; but I did full well.

John Barton was in high spirits, and proud of his bride; I told them of my own happy prospects, and of Elliott's approaching nuptials; and increased their mirth and festivity.

I took an opportunity of informing the bride, of Lady Belmour's situation; and of Mr. Selby's endeavour to procure her house for me; she rejoiced at both. I shall often think of you there, Madam, said I; and I will hope one day to see you there.—Oh no, Sir! said she; never will I be seen there again; some ill-natured or unlucky person might recollect me, to my eternal confusion. All my wish is now to fall into a different class of people, and never to be seen or known by any of the circle that knew me formerly. I will endeavour to deserve my present lot, and to merit the worthy man who has placed me in a respectable situation.

I honour you, Madam, for these sentiments; I am certain that you will deserve your lot, and do credit to your husband. The wedding folks insisted upon our dancing among them; we could not get away before twelve o'clock, nor

then without much difficulty, and with a promise to visit them again. The ladies at Mrs. Barclay's refused to admit us, but sent us word it was time for sober people to go to bed, whither they were going; so we were forced to go to our lodgings, without paying our duty, and asking blessing.

Sophia is making a pacquet to send to S——; but I will not wait for it, lest any thing should interfere between us and the treaty for the house.

With the most grateful sense of your friendship and good offices,

I am, dear Sir,

ever yours affectionately,

EDWARD SAVILLE.

LETTER XXXVIII.

MISS MELCOMBE TO MRS. SELBY.

WITH a heart overflowing with happiness, your Sophia continues her narration. The day after the solemn interview, I received a note from the Earl himself, desiring to know how I did, after the emotions I had sustained. I returned an answer expressive of my duty and affection; the same day, Mr. Saville called on him in Grosvenor-square, with the same tender enquiries.

On Thursday morning Lord B—— called on me; he said, he came by his own inclination, and by his father's permission, to see how I was; and also to thank me for every part of my conduct respecting himself.

I answered Lord B—— with assurances of my eternal gratitude and affection: our conversation was long; in the course of it, I asked him if Lord D—— had yet mentioned me to his lady. I believe not, said he; it is a task upon my father; but I am certain he will perform his promise to you.

Lord B—— asked me for the particulars of my adventure with Lord S——; in telling my own story, I told *that* of my friend Frances; our deliverance; Mr. Elliott's share of it; his passion for Fanny; the consequences of it; and the present situation of these lovers. He desired I would introduce him to all my friends, that he might know them. Lord B—— staid till three o'clock before he departed.

Lord D—— has honoured me with a morning visit. He made tender enquiries after my health, and expressed great satisfaction in every part of my behaviour; and likewise in the affection of Lord B—— and me, towards each other.

He then told me, that Mr. Seville had put

the writings of his estate into *his* hands, and that he had given directions to his lawyer concerning the settlements. Mr. Saville is impatient to call you *his*. I have consented to your union; and I hope you will not make unnecessary delay, my Sophia.—I bowed in silence.

Lord D——, then took out a very handsome pocket-book—Take this, my Sophia; in it you will find what is wanting for the necessary preparation for your marriage. Mrs. Barclay will favour you with her assistance, so will your other friend; she is a very fine young woman, and I like her spirit.

I am desired to hasten you, in order that both marriages may be solemnized the same day.—My Lord, said I, that can hardly be.—He smiled; Not *hardly*, Sophia! there is no hardship in the case; but gently, and kindly, and speedily, let it be! I know how you young ladies behave in these cases; but a father's wishes will, I know, prevail with you!—His wishes, my Lord, are commands with me. I know it, my dear girl.—and *especially*, when his commands are the accomplishment of your own wishes.

I will soon introduce you to the rest of your relations, but I must first make smooth the way for you. I kissed his hand in thankfulness; he embraced me, and took his leave for the

morning. Lord D—— is a most engaging man; I love, revere, and admire him, more than I can express.

A noble present, my dear Anna! Bank-notes for five hundred pounds, for my preparations.

Mrs. Barclay and Miss Freewill are in transports at my father's kindness and generosity, and at his hurrying orders too.

Mr. Saville has been here, and I have complained of his precipitation, and his cunning in getting my father on his side. He claimed the benefit of my father's influence, and the ladies declared in his favour; every one is against me, and all resolved to promote this double celebration. The coach is ordered, and we are going about these preparations. Mrs. Barclay is as much pleased with this bustle, as if it was upon her own account.

I am in raptures at the explanation of Mr. Selby's mystery: oh, my dearest friend! shall I indeed be so happy as to live within reach of you and my dear mamma? shall I see you continually, advise with you, communicate all my joys and griefs to you, and share yours in return? This will be the crown of my happiness, and I shall have nothing more to wish or pray for, but a heart grateful to heaven for such inestimable blessings as are now in prospect before me.

I have just had a morning visit from Lord B——, my sweet brother! how precious is every proof of his affection to me! After some agreeable conversation, he took a shagreen-case out of his pocket, and opening it, I saw a very handsome pair of bracelets; and in the centre of one of them, his own dear image, done by a capital hand.—Will you, my dear sister, said he, honour me so far as to wear these for my sake?—I exclaimed, The honour is mine! but the pleasure exceeds it greatly.—He then kissed my hands, and bowed most gracefully. I returned the same homage to the dear picture. He was delighted. —You will remember me when you look on this shadow, said he.—I do not want this to remind me of you, my Lord. You encourage me by your amiable goodness, said he, to request a favour in return.—Any thing in my power, my Lord, you may command.—He bowed: It is that you will sit to the same artist; and let me have the happiness to converse with your shadow, when I cannot see the substance.—You honour me too much, my Lord, but at the same time I will have another copy taken, for a dear friend of mine.

Now do not expect me to tell you for *whom* this *other* copy is *designed:* I shall not tell you till some time hence, I cannot say how long. My Lord B—— said a thousand polite and

obliging things to me, which encouraged me to ask him several interesting questions concerning his mother, his brothers, and sisters—Take notice, said he, that I insist upon the first place in your affections. My eldest sister, Amelia, is a fine girl, but she is proud and high-spirited; the younger, Louisa, is not so handsome, but more amiable; you will love her, and she you; she is my favourite. My brother George is like Amelia, proud and haughty, but generous and friendly. My youngest brother, Lionel, is a lovely boy, about twelve years old, and the darling of all the family; he is at school. George has just got a commission in the army. I will say nothing of my mother to prepossess you; she is a good wife and mother, and very solicitous for her children's future establishment. But I believe I am the least *ambitious* of the family.—Mr. Saville came in before Lord B—— went away; they were equally glad to meet each other; they conversed on several subjects, and I had the pleasure to observe the same good principles, and the same right judgment, in both. Lord B—— stayed till near dinner-time, and then seemed to leave us reluctantly.

Mr. Saville is continually here. Mr. Brerewood called on Mr. Saville to-day: he tells him that Lady Belmour has thrown herself into the liber-

ties of the King's Bench, and laughs at her creditors.

Miss Freewill has shewn me some beautiful lockets of hair in various elegant designs; she has given me a taste for them. I must have something of this kind to present as keep-sakes, for so she calls them. She and I are to exchange one of these trinkets; and I shall order something of this kind for Mrs. Barclay.

Lord D—— has written to Mr. Saville, desiring him not to order an equipage; he has bespoke a chariot and horses for the parade of our nuptials. Mr. Saville has paid his acknowledgements; but he says he will have a plain coach for use and convenience, and that our friends in the country may have their share of it. My heart thanks him for this thought, and my friends will love him for it.

I am going to fit clothes, and to spend time, and more money at the shrine of Fashion; but I look forward to a time of leisure and reflexion, when I shall endeavour to atone for the hours thus spent; and employ the remainder of my time to better purpose. I will now conclude this letter, with my heart's wishes and regards to my dear mother and sister.

SOPHIA.

LETTER XXXIX.

MISS MELCOMBE TO MRS. SELBY.

I HAVE spent a whole morning in sitting for my picture.

Lord B—— attended us to Mr. ——, and came home with us; Mrs. Barclay asked him to dine with us; he accepted the invitation, and sent a note to his father to excuse his absence at home.

In the evening he took his leave before tea; saying, He had business of a particular kind, and perhaps might return again.

In about an hour and half we heard a violent rap at the door, that bade us expect visitors. Mrs. Barclay had ordered her servant to deny her to all chance visitors, and wondered who it could be. Presently Lord B—— entered the room, leading a young lady of a most amiable aspect, and genteel person. He presented her to me by the name of Lady Louisa B——; and me to her by the appellation of Lady Sophia, which he had never used before. We embraced each other, and made the usual compliments. Lord B—— apologized to Mrs. Barclay, for presenting his sister first to me. Lady Louisa paid her compliments to Mrs. Barclay and the company

and Lord B—— led her into conversation with us. She is a fine young lady, not handsome, but perfectly genteel and amiable. She expressed a desire of being better acquainted with me, which I most sincerely returned. I said, My Lord, you can best inform me, whether I am likely to have that honour and happiness.—The ice is broke, said he: be not impatient, my dear sister; you will soon be presented to all the family; my father permits Louisa to visit you with me this evening.

A new dress is brought home, on purpose for me to appear in, when I am presented to Lady D——. I actually dread it. I fear I shall appear awkward and confused before her, and even my modesty will lessen me in her opinion; however, I will exert all the courage in my power, and endeavour to behave with some spirit upon the occasion, as if I thought myself not unworthy to claim the right of a child in my own father.

Lord B—— and his sister took their leave before supper. Mrs. Barclay is to have a grand rout to-morrow; I wish to be excused being at it, but I am not allowed; all our company are to be present, and to be stared at as contracted lovers, for every body that comes here is told our situation.

Mrs. Barclay calls me Lady Sophia; but I

have absolutely forbad the title to be used by her, and all our own circle of friends; and I forbid it to all those in the village of S——; I would only wish to hear it from Lord D——'s family, as it sets me upon an equal seat with my proud relations.

Mrs. Barclay's rout is over, and I never desire to see another.

As a spectator, I was entertained; and could have laughed at the company's expence, as very probably they did at mine. I was wicked enough to take two designs in my pocket-book. I have copied them, and I send them for your entertainment: you will think their dress and air exaggerated, but you will be mistaken; they are only modelled by the standard of fashion.

A note from the Earl of D——, with the summons I both wish and fear.

"Lord and Lady D——'s compliments to Mrs. Barclay and all her guests, and desire the favour of their company next Thursday to dinner."

Mr. Elliott complains of the slowness of our proceedings, and I of their hastiness. Saville complains of my reserve to him; and, in short, we are all dissatisfied. Oh, that this bustle was all over, and I were with you at the Parsonage! these men are never satisfied. Mrs. Barclay is the most obliging of women; we give her an in-

finity of trouble; but she says, She takes pleasure in it, and she really appears to do so. If I am so happy to have a house of my own, I shall urge her to give me her company, and see me settled in it.

Miss Freewill enjoys the parade of new clothes and ornaments, and she has no objection to a town life: but she has not had the advantage of a Mrs. Bennet to instruct her youth, and to teach her how to distinguish between the real comforts of life, and the vanities and parade of it. I have no merit in knowing better how to estimate them, for I only utter my mamma's opinions in my own words; but her opinions are truly mine, and I hope will be so as long as I live.

I am called down stairs to receive my share of a visit from some ladies who profess a great regard for me, and are desirous of my company; but who, if I judge rightly, will, in three days after I leave town, forget that they ever saw me.

Adieu for the present, my dearest friend.

SOPHIA B——.

LETTER XL.

MR. SAVILLE TO MR. SELBY.

My heart's treasure, my beloved Sophia, writes continually to Mrs. Selby; I shall therefore only

speak of such things as make no part of her letters.

I have seen Mr. Munden again: he was in a very bad humour, and wanted somebody to vent it upon; he questioned me concerning Lady Belmour's past and present situation: he said, Some enemy of her Ladyship's had stirred up her creditors to take the step they had lately taken, and he wished he knew who it was; perhaps I could inform him?—I said, "all that I knew was, that she had been called upon to pay her just debts; that I saw nothing surprising in it, for that though it was out of fashion in London to pay tradesmen, it was still customary in the country."—That is like your saucy remarks, Sir; but Lady Belmour will find friends to assist her. She talks of disposing of the lease of her house there, I hear.—So much the better, said I, for the village will have a happy riddance of her.

The settlements are getting ready under Lord D——'s directions, and I am making every preparation for the day that will fix me the happiest of men. Sophia is employed in the same manner.

She resigns her will to her noble father, who is now the kindest of parents; she consents to give her hand to her adoring Saville; but still she is cold and reserved to me; she keeps me at the greatest distance, and is offended if I use the least degree of familiarity. I am mortified, and

sometimes distressed, at her behaviour.—Will you pity me, my friend? or will you laugh at me?—I suspect the latter.

You will tell me, that I am a self-tormentor; but if these thoughts arise in a too tender heart, how can I help it? My whole heart, and all its hopes and wishes, are absorbed in one pursuit, in my Sophia; and if my love is returned with coldness and indifference, can I be satisfied—can I be happy? I open my heart to you: advise me, comfort me, reprove me; I will be thankful for your admonitions.

After all, Sophia gives me her hand freely; she presented me to her father; she acknowledged esteem for me. I will accept her hand with transport, and trust to my tender and affectionate behaviour to make me an interest in her heart. I hope soon to be enabled to tell you my happy day. I hope to spend my Christmas with you. Sophia wishes to return to her dear village, and dearer friends; and her pleasure is a law to me.

I am always, dear Sir,

Yours, affectionately,

EDWARD SAVILLE.

LETTER XLI.

MR. SELBY TO EDWARD SAVILLE, ESQ.

I ANSWER your letter immediately, to acquaint you that I am doing all in my power for your service here, and that your last manœuvre is of equal use; for Lady Belmour has actually the lease of the house in her possession, and may dispose of it to another, if she can make any advantage of it; therefore lose no time in obtaining it. Offer her a premium, nay, offer to pay the arrears of the rent, rather than let it escape you; at the same time, be careful to conceal your name; let her not suspect you are the person. As soon as you have finished your treaty, let me know it, and I will take possession for you. My wife and mother will give me their assistance, to regulate your household, and prepare for your reception.

And now for the other part of your letter. I am in doubt whether to reprove or to laugh at you—you deserve both; but, in my opinion, a serious reproof is likely to be of the most service, especially to a tender and sensible mind.

Sophia acknowledges you to her father, as a favoured lover; she avows her regard for you; she consents to go with you to the altar. What more would you have? Her behaviour is ex-

actly what it ought to be; that delicate and charming *retenuë*, is calculated to inspire you with that respect, which should ever attend a passion that is to be the foundation of the happiness of your future life. She is not the plaything of your idle hours, but the companion and friend of your more serious ones; the mistress of your house; the mother of your children —sacred and venerable ties! Those who approach the altar with due respect, are the most likely to preserve sacred the vows they there make before the Great Author of their being and happiness.

With this lesson I conclude, and am always yours truly,

G. Selby.

LETTER XLII.

MISS MELCOMBE TO MRS. SELBY.

Rejoice with me, my dearest Anna! One of the days I most dreaded is past.

Yesterday was, upon the whole, a happy day to me; yet it was not without its allay.—I will give you particulars.

About two o'clock Lord B—— came to fetch me: he was richly drest, to do honour to me and my friends; he is more amiable than hand-

some, but he looks benevolent, andh as the smile of an angel. He said every thing that could encourage me to meet his mother without fear.

I was inquisitive.—He bade me fear nothing, for that his father had found the certificate of his first marriage, till when, Lady D—— persisted in thinking me an illegitimate child; and Lord D—— was obliged to explain every circumstance of time, place, and manner, which gave her some chagrin, but made her more compliable afterwards.

I asked for further particulars.—He smiled.—Ah, Sophia! you are one of Eve's daughters.—I can only tell you what I saw and heard; for I was present when the certificate was produced. My mother frowned, and said there was no occasion for me to be present.—I offered to withdraw, but my father called me back, and gave the paper into my hand. Perhaps, Sir, said he, you may have doubts, but this will convince you.

My Lord, I want no other proof than your word: I should be unpardonable to doubt whatever you affirm.—Methinks, said my mother, you need not compliment one parent, at another's expence.—That is not my intention, said I; but when you see my sister, and know her merit, I am certain your Ladyship will excuse me.—My father behaved kindly and tenderly to

us both. He praised my mother; he spoke tenderly of her children: and reconciled her by his endearments, to himself, and to her son; and she has since been more easy and satisfied.—By this account, I found that Lord D—— had trouble enough *to smooth the way for me*, which was his own expression.

Mr. Elliott and Miss Freewill, Mrs. Barclay and Mr. Saville, came to us, handsomely dressed for the occasion.

For my part, I was surprised at my own figure in the glass, and thought it was some other person.—This is not Sophia Melcombe, said I to myself. Who is it then? Lady Sophia B——. Oh, I am your Ladyship's most obedient humble servant! But I do not like you half so well as my old acquaintance. What then is become of Sophia Melcombe? the beloved name, which belonged to that amiable woman, who loved her husband well enough to sacrifice her *life*, to preserve the secret of her marriage. Ever dear, ever venerable, is that name, and that recollection; it is enshrined in my memory, once and for ever.

When our company were all ready, Lord B—— observed that there were five of us, which was one too many for the coach.

Will you, my dear Mr. Saville, permit me to ask the favour of my dear sister's company in

the chariot with me?—My Lord, answered Mr. Saville, I freely resign her to you, and I am never more happy than when we are honoured with your company.

Lord B—— offered his hand to me. Saville led Mrs. Barclay, Elliott his mistress, into the carriages; and we set off for Grosvenor-square. I was in flutters all the way: Lord B—— said every thing kind and encouraging, but my heart was too much for my reason to govern.

When we arrived at the house, I trembled exceedingly. Lord B—— turned my attention to every thing that fell in our way; he led me into the drawing-room—the Earl met us; he saluted me tenderly, and encouraged me.—Let me present my daughter to her mother, said he. —So saying, he led me to his Lady. I kneeled to her; she raised and saluted me in silence.—She is indeed a fine woman; but there is a pride and dignity in her appearance, that strikes me with awe and distance.

Lord D—— called Lady Amelia.—I present to you a sister who deserves your friendship. Louisa, said he.—She came and embraced me. I hope, said she, my dear sister Sophia will not receive me as a stranger. I embraced her affectionately, but was not able to utter a word.

The rest of our company followed me. Lord D—— presented them all to his Lady, who re-

ceived them politely, but with an air of distance and superiority. Lord D—— and his amiable son were the only speakers for some minutes.

Lady Louisa placed herself next me, and took my hand in hers; and strove to give me courage and composure. Her sister looked rather stately, and seemed to scrutinize us with her eye. She is a very fine young lady; in point of beauty, the first of the family; but her looks chill you, and keep you at distance; she is her mother's likeness and favourite.

Mrs. Barclay has that ease in her behaviour, that is the result of a constant intercourse with the beau-monde. She entered into a conversation with the gentlemen; for the ladies said but little. Just before dinner entered Mr. George B——, my Lord's second son; he was announced to all the company, and to me particularly. He is a fine manly youth, with spirit and vivacity in his countenance; he is taller than Lord B—— and of a darker complexion; black eyes, very bright and sensible; he behaved very politely to me, and addressed me frequently in conversation. I thought he honoured me with looks of approbation, and seemed desirous of a farther acquaintance with me. Dinner shuffled us together, and seemed to open our hearts; we became more easy and familiar to each other.

Lord D—— took polite notice of me at table, and I began to recover my spirits and courage.

Lord D—— behaved very kindly to me; he insisted upon my drinking a second glass of wine. He bade me keep up my spirits, for he had a design upon me, that he would not explain just now, but would before I went away.

He took great notice of Mr. Saville; and so did Lord B——. When we rose from table, we adjourned into the drawing-room, and began to converse with more ease and freedom. Lord D—— asked Mr. Saville, where he proposed to reside after his marriage? He replied, That he had always preferred a country-life for his fixed abode, and only meant to visit London occasionally; that I was partial to the village where I had livĕd in the early part of my life, and to the worthy family with whom I resided; that he had the same partiality to both; that Mr. Selby was a most amiable man, and that he had the same attachment to him, that I had to Mrs. Selby. For all these reasons, he was determined to settle there; and that he had just now an opportunity of it, by taking a house within a mile of the Parsonage.

Lord B—— commended his resolution of settling in the country; he pointed out the dangers of a town-life. He praised my attachment

to my dear village and friends, and the prudent intentions of us both: he then enquired where was the house Mr. Saville mentioned?

Mr. Saville gave him a brief account of Lady Belmour, her company, her character, her employment: he then mentioned her debts, and her being obliged to leave that house in consequence; her present situation, and his treaty with her by a third hand. Lord D—— wished him success; Mr. Saville described the house, and the country round it.

Lord D—— asked, where Mr. Saville had his education? He gave him a brief account of it, and of his guardian, Mr. Munden. He told my Lord, that he had the happiness to have *two Mentors* employed in finishing his education. He described them both; he gave my Lord a letter he lately received from Mr. Johnson, commending his choice of a wife, and of a country-life also. It is an excellent letter.

Lord D—— read it aloud, and admired every part of it.

Lady D—— then took a share in the conversation; she said several polite things to Mrs. Barclay, on the subject of her protection to two young ladies in our distressed situation.

Lord D—— seemed to accept every word from her, as a favour to himself. Lord B——

mentioned the commencement of his acquaintance with me; my alarm at the sight of Lord S——, and all that followed afterwards.

The young ladies were interested in the whole conversation, for they had not before heard any particulars of our late and present situation; they listened attentively, and seemed pleased with the information. I had little other share in it, than to acknowledge the kindness and generosity of all my dear friends.

Lady D—— asked if we chose to have cards.—My Lord said, he begged permission to answer for us in the negative, for that he had provided a different entertainment for us. Mr. Saville smiled, and seemed to be in the secret. Soon after a servant came in, and told my Lord the gentlemen were in the library.

My Lord arose.—Now I will explain myself: the gentlemen of the law have brought home the settlements, Mr. Saville; and we will take this opportunity to execute them.

Sir, lead your elect wife into the room; and I beg that as many of her friends as choose it, will follow us.

My Lord offered his hand to Mrs. Barclay, and went first; Mr. Saville and I followed them; but I took Lady Louisa's hand, and said, Will your Ladyship do me the honour of your company?—She came directly. Elliot and his

Fanny; Lord B—— followed them; the rest stayed behind.

Lord B—— went back to the drawing-room, and soon returned with his brother George. Lady D——, and her daughter Amelia, thought their presence too great an honour to us.

This was a new trial of my courage, and I hardly know how I went through it. The writings were signed by the principals, and properly witnessed and executed; and I rejoiced when it was over.

The lawyers withdrew; and afterwards Lord D—— said, Now, my good friends, before we separate, let us fix the day for these two pair of lovers to complete their happiness.—God bless your Lordship! said Elliott; I have delayed my wedding above a week, that I might see my friends made happy the same day I am; and now I hope there is nothing more to wait for.—Nothing in the world, said Lord D——; let me have the pleasure, to appoint the day.—We were all silent.—I shall name a day in the next week, and I hope the ladies will make no objection; Mrs. Barclay, you must give me your influence with them. Let it be next Tuesday. Saville took my Lord's hand, and kissed it in raptures; Elliott clapped his hands, and shouted for joy; he kissed my Lord's hand also.—Moderate your joy, my children, said my Lord, and listen to

me. I will give orders for the wedding-day's entertainment; it shall be at the St. Alban's tavern; I will meet you at church in the morning, and I will do the office of a father to both these young ladies; will you, madam, accept me?—My Lord, says Miss Freewill, it is an honour I could not expect; but I receive it with due gratitude and respect.—My Lord saluted us both, and the rest of the men present had the assurance to follow his example.

We did not get away till one o'clock; and when we got home the gentlemen were very ungovernable, and we had much ado to send them home. At last Fanny and I made our escape up stairs; and Mrs. Barclay soon after followed us, after schooling the men, and turning them out of doors, as they called it. Thus, my dear friend, the most important day of my life is fixed—join your prayers for my happiness? I shall soon have a third name to add to that of your

SOPHIA.

LETTER XLIII.

MR. SAVILLE TO THE REV. MR. SELBY.

SOPHIA has written a long letter to Mrs. Selby. I asked her some questions concerning the con-

ents; she blushed, and seemed jealous of my curiosity.—Pray, Sir, said she, do you expect to see the contents of my letters?—By no means, madam, said I; I only wish to know what you have written, that I may not repeat the same circumstances to our friends.—Well, Sir, I have told them all that passed yesterday, so you need not repeat any part of it.—I am answered, madam.

Lord D—— makes her fortune six thousand pounds in present; and gives me leave to expect it to be made *ten*, at his decease. Her jointure is six hundred a year; and all the money she brings, goes to portion the younger children of our marriage; my Lord and I are mutually satisfied.

Mr. Brerewood has happily finished his treaty with Lady Belmour.

I send you the lease by the coach to I——, and you will take possession of the house for me, and do whatever you think necessary for our reception. To any other man I should apologize for the trouble I give you; but our acknowledged and confirmed friendship warrants my call upon you, and the study of my future life shall be to enjoy and return it. Commend me to the ladies, to Mr. and Mrs. Franklin, to all who know me in your circle; tell them I am happy. You know our day; let your congratu-

lations add to our felicity. Your thrice happy friend,

EDWARD SAVILLE.

LETTER XLIV.

MISS MELCOMBE TO MRS. SELBY.

ONE more letter, my dearest Anna Maria, while I am my own mistress, and can do as I please. Men are incroachers, my dear: already my time is claimed by the master of my destiny; he grudges me the hours I spend in conversing with my friends, and is jealous of my regard to every one but himself.

Miss Freewill has received two curious letters, under cover, by Mrs. Barclay's former direction to a coffee-house in the city: *one* from her guardian, ordering her on the receipt of it to return home immediately to Mrs. Holden's; that he will pay her no money till she is under their protection; and that, if she does not return home soon, he will advertise her in the public papers. The *other* from Mrs. Holden, in a vulgar but canting and fawning style, persuading her to return, and put herself under her *motherly wing*, where she may be safe from the dangers and temptations of this wicked world; promis-

ing that she shall have an apartment to herself, and a servant on purpose to attend upon her; and her guardian will allow her fifty pounds a year for pocket-money, and to make *ducks* and *drakes* of: she bids her consider what a disgrace it will be, to have her name at full length in the public newspapers; and desires she may know where she is, that she may either come and fetch her, or else appoint where she may meet her on the road. We have gossiped and laughed over these letters, and Fanny is resolved to make a spirited reply to them.

She has fulfilled her promise, as you shall judge:—

"I Frances Freewill do acknowledge the receipt of two very impertinent letters from Mr. Marsden and Mrs. Holden, to which I am determined to give *full* and *satisfactory answers* in the public papers, one day in the next week."—*London, Nov.* 1779.

The men are delighted with Fanny's spirit; and Mrs. Barclay says it is an excellent reference to the papers, where they will read the account of her marriage.

Elliott is in raptures with her; he admires every word in the note, and says there never was any thing so clever, in so small a compass.

Mr. Brerewood drank tea with us. The letters were shewn to him, and the answer likewise;

he asked Miss Freewill many particulars concerning her father's will;—she never saw it. He intends to get a sight of it in the commons; and to inquire how far her guardian's power extends, both with regard to her person and fortune.—Mr. Brerewood is a very sensible and polite man; Mr. Saville has told you of his management, with regard to Lady Belmour.—I am overjoyed that the treaty for her house is concluded; I long to go thither, and to taste the pure and tranquil pleasures of the country, and to enjoy the society of my dear friends at S——. Expect me there as soon as I can get away with the approbation of my dear and honoured father; I think he is the dearer to me, for having been so long unkind, and so lately restored to me.

Heaven grant me a deep and grateful sense of the blessings that surround me!—My two brothers have called upon me for a morning visit of an hour; they politely said, they would not encroach upon our time, which they supposed was employed in preparations for next Tuesday.

Why is my heart heavy at times?—I wish you was with me; I wish my mamma was here; or rather that I was with you, and that my brother Selby was to perform the sacred ceremony that fixes my destiny for life. The incomparable Richardson has well observed, "that in the

midst of happiness, the sighing heart will remind us of imperfection." Assist with your prayers and wishes,

Your sister and friend,

SOPHIA.

LETTER XLV.

MR. SELBY TO EDWARD SAVILLE, ESQ.

UNDER this cover you will receive the congratulations of all and each of your avowed friends at the Parsonage; accept the united wishes, prayers, and blessings of this house, for your present and future happiness! Joy to Edward Saville and his beloved Sophia! long and mutual may it be!

My mother and wife both will write on the occasion.

G. SELBY.

I CANNOT suffer this day to pass over, without adding my congratulation to those of the other friends, of my dear Sophia, and her beloved Saville,—Joy, joy, joy, to you both!

We shall celebrate the weddings here; we have a wedding cake. Mr. Franklin's family are with us, and we will have our share of the pleasure of this auspicious day.

Mr. Collins and Miss Grove were married last

Thursday; they will be with us in the evening, and we shall drink to your happiness.—Joy to Mr. and Mrs. Elliott; joy and our best wishes!—My mother leaves her house to them this day; they may take the furniture as it stands, or hire it with the house.—But what have I to do to prate of business on this day?—away with it!—Let me mention only my present joy, and my future wishes.—May your next letter fix the day of your return to us! I long to embrace my friend, to share her joy, to run over her house, and see that every thing there meets with her approbation. In impatient expectation of this happiness,

I am yours most affectionately,

ANNA MARIA SELBY.

LETTER XLVI.

MR. SAVILLE TO THE REV. MR. SELBY.

MAY every kind wish and blessing from our dear friends at S—— be returned sevenfold upon their own heads! Thus wish and thus pray, Edward Saville and his beloved Sophia! With a heart overflowing with happiness, I sit down to acknowledge every instance of your friendship, my dear Mr. Selby.

I will endeavour to compose my mind, and

give you some account of yesterday's events. I shall write at times, as leisure serves; for I ought to give you all a share in my happiness. I cannot pay you a greater compliment than to deny myself the enjoyment of my Sophia's company, to converse with her friends and mine.

Yesterday morning we met by appointment at St. ——— Church. I carried Mr. Brerewood with our party; Lord D—— brought his two eldest sons and two daughters, a gentleman of the law, and a young gentleman and lady, the friends of his son Lord B——, and his daughters.

The brides were dressed charmingly, and looked charmingly; but Sophia's sweet countenance wore a veil of timidity, which I strove to disperse by every tender and delicate attention. I put her in mind of my dear Selby's happy day, and of our revered mother's lesson to her fair daughter on that occasion. She thanked me for reminding her; and said, She would keep her Anna's behaviour in her eye the whole day, and endeavour to imitate it. The other bride has more courage than Sophia; yet the behaviour of both was extremely proper, and did them credit in the eye of every beholder.

The ceremony was happily performed; I leave it to the ladies to relate the interesting particulars. Lord D—— claimed the right of a father to both the brides; and mutual congratulations

were given and received in the church! after which we adjourned to the St. Alban's Tavern, where a plentiful breakfast was prepared for us, which we all did honour to.

After this refreshment, the compliments and congratulations were renewed. Lord D—— presented to Mrs. Barclay a fine diamond-ring, as a token of friendship; and an acknowledgement for her generous protection of both his daughters, he said. She received it politely, and observed, That Lady Sophia had already made her a present the most acceptable to her, in giving her her picture.—It was well judged of the dear girl, said my Lord; but I hope, Madam, you will allow her father a place in the list of your friends.—Lord D—— gave each of the brides a diamond-hoop to wear over the wedding-ring; which they received with proper acknowledgments. Elliott was half mad with joy and gratitude; he kneeled to Lord D——, and thanked him a thousand times for the honour he did to his fair bride; and said, His Lordship's countenance, was a fresh obligation upon him, to strive to deserve his happiness.

After our compliments were over, and we were seated; my friend Mr. Brerewood arose, and, bowing, said, I will now beg leave to engage the attention of this honourable and happy company; I have brought something that I hope

will contribute to this day's entertainment.—We all gazed, and listened to him; and I wondered what he was going to say, when he drew a paper out of his pocket and proceeded in his oration.

"I presume that this company are informed in general terms, that this young lady's guardian had abused the power her father's will gave him, over her person and fortune; that he placed her in a family where she was unpolitely treated, and where her accommodations were in no respect suitable to her fortune. That in consequence she was disgusted and unhappy, and sought for acquaintance more agreeable to her; and at length was induced to put herself into the protection of another guardian, and indeed the most proper one, a worthy husband. I had a desire to inform myself of the particulars of her father's will, that I might know how far her guardian's power extended; and also in hopes to be of some service to the young couple; who, as I supposed, might meet with some difficulties during the remainder of the young lady's minority. Accordingly I searched the Commons; I found the will; I took a copy of it, which I have now brought with me. But as reading a *will* is not the most agreeable amusement upon a wedding-day, I will only beg your patience while I read a clause, which perhaps may be the most satisfactory one in it. "I do order by this my

" will, that the said fortune shall be paid to my " said daughter Frances Freewill, upon the day " of her coming to the age of twenty-one years, " or the day of her marriage, which ever shall " first happen." And now I shall claim a kiss of the bride as my reward.

Here my friend concluded his speech. Elliott started up, ran and embraced him; called him his best friend, and swore he should have twenty kisses if he pleased.

Every one of our little circle expressed our joy, and the congratulations were renewed. Lord D—— called us to order, but it was some minutes before he could be heard. He thanked Mr. Brerewood for his intelligence, and desired that he would give the young people his advice how to proceed.

I would advise, said Mr. Brerewood, that they should send to Mr. Marsden, a copy of Mr. Freewill's will; and with it a demand of the surrender of the trust, and an account of the interest of the fortune, to be paid into the hands of a *person* whom they shall appoint for that purpose.—Very proper, said Lord D——: whom will you choose to appoint?—Elliott referred to his lady.—She answered very properly, If you approve it, Sir, I think nobody can be so proper as this gentleman, who has already approved himself our friend.—You give me the greatest

pleasure, Madam, answered Elliott; it was my wish, but I thought it right that the motion should be yours.—I am pleased with you both, said Lord D——; I am certain from this omen, that you will act properly in all other respects. —I accept the employment, said Mr. Brerewood: and I will act for your benefit to the best of my ability.—I will answer both for your ability and integrity, said Edward Saville; and I rejoice with my friends on their falling into such hands.

There is one thing more to be considered, said the Earl; I think that Mr. Elliott ought to take the earliest opportunity, of settling his lady's fortune, upon her, and her heirs; the generous confidence she has reposed in him, deserves that he should justify her choice of a guardian of her person and fortune. Elliott rose, and again kneeled to Lord D——, My Lord, said he, you have been so kind to act as a father to this dear lady; will you, in that light, still act for her? Will you direct what should be done for her advantage, and give instructions to this gentleman, Mr. Brerewood, to draw up writings for that purpose; I will execute them with all my soul; and shew you and all the world, that her fortune was not my principal motive, when I offered myself to her acceptance. I would only be her steward and her protector; but I would

not for the world injure her, or her fortune. If your Lordship will be so good to take me under your direction, you will lay me under everlasting obligation.

You are an honest, worthy, generous young man, said my Lord; I love you as you deserve, and I will accept the trust.—I put myself into your Lordship's hands, answered Mrs. Elliott, and I thank God for having given me such noble and generous friends; and I will ever acknowledge Mr. Elliott's generosity, and study to make him amends for it.—You have done that already, said he, and it shall be the business of my whole life, to shew my sense of the obligations you have laid upon me.

Bravo! bravo! said the Earl; this is true spirit. You must nominate your trustees, my dear Madam; and then we will leave what remains to Mr. Brerewood.—If I durst presume, said she, I would name your Lordship.—You do me honour, Madam: I accept the trust; and, if you allow me, I will take Mr. Saville for another; and Mr. Brerewood shall be the acting person for your service. Mr. and Mrs. Elliott both made their acknowledgments; and Mr. Brerewood took notes in his book, of every particular.

This event being of some consequence, I have given you a minute account of it. But I shall

now take my leave of you for the present. I will, when I return, give you a brief account of the rest of the day; at this time I shall only add, that I am happy past all expression, and that I am your friend and brother,

EDWARD SAVILLE.

LETTER XLVII.

MR. SAVILLE TO MR. SELBY.

I WILL now acquit myself of my promise, and take up the thread of my narration of what passed on the happiest day of my life. We had a magnificent and well-ordered dinner, with the best wines that could be procured; the day was honoured as a festival, by every one present; the ladies were allowed to retire into another room, where tea and coffee were ordered; we soon followed them, by a general vote that there was no society, no happiness, without them. Lord D—— led the conversation, and was the liveliest person present: my friend Elliott was restrained by the persons of superior rank in company; or his joy would have shown itself in a riotous style; but he behaved extremely well, and did himself credit with every body. After tea, we were summoned into a large room well lighted, with a band of music in it. On our en-

trance, they played one of Abel's concertos; after which Lord D—— desired Mr. Saville and his bride to open the ball; they obeyed, but with some timidity before such judges: however they came off with general applause. My Lord called upon the other bride and bridegroom, to dance a minuet; but Elliott begged to be excused, saying, he should only disgrace his charming partner. I begged of Lord B—— to supply his place, which he did with great readiness. It was an elegant minuet indeed, and far exceeded the first: afterwards, Mr. George B—— and Miss Lorton, the young lady who came with her brother at Lord B——'s invitation; Lady Amelia and Mr. Lorton; Lady Louisa and Edward Saville. We then danced a Cotillion! then Lord B—— and his sister Louisa, danced the Minuet de la Cour.

At Lord D——'s earnest intreaty, Mrs. Barclay walked a minuet with him; after which we all went to country dances. At twelve we were summoned to supper; after which we thought it too late to return into the ball-room: it was agreed before we went to church, that I should resign my lodgings to Elliott and his bride, and that I should be allowed to take Fanny's place at Mrs. Barclay's; we returned home according to this happy allotment; but it was past two o'clock before we arrived at our respective homes.

On Wednesday we stayed at home, and enjoyed our greatest happiness in the society of our amiable brides. Mrs. Barclay insists upon our eating at her table all together, so long as we stay in town. In the evening, I devoted a leisure hour to my dear friends at S——; and Thursday I proceeded in my journal. I will now briefly recite our present engagements; and from them you will judge when you may expect to see us.

On Sunday, we make our appearance at church; where we shall return thanks for our present blessings, and implore the benediction of Heaven upon our engagements; after which we are to dine at Lord D——'s, and probably spend the evening. On Monday I have (with Mrs. Barclay's permission) invited the worthy Mr. John Barton and his lady to spend the evening with us; on that day, will be brought home an handsome piece of plate, which I shall present to that friendly pair.

We shall then take our leave of that worthy couple; but I shall never come to London without visiting them; and I hope they will visit us in the country some time hence, when all the past is forgotten.

On Tuesday Lord D—— and his family are to dine with Mrs. Barclay, and take leave of us for this season.

On Wednesday I design to carry my prize, my angel-wife, to pay compliments with me to Mr. Munden, and to take leave of him, and to call at some other places. In the evening, Mr. Brerewood brings Mr. Elliott's writings, to be signed and executed.

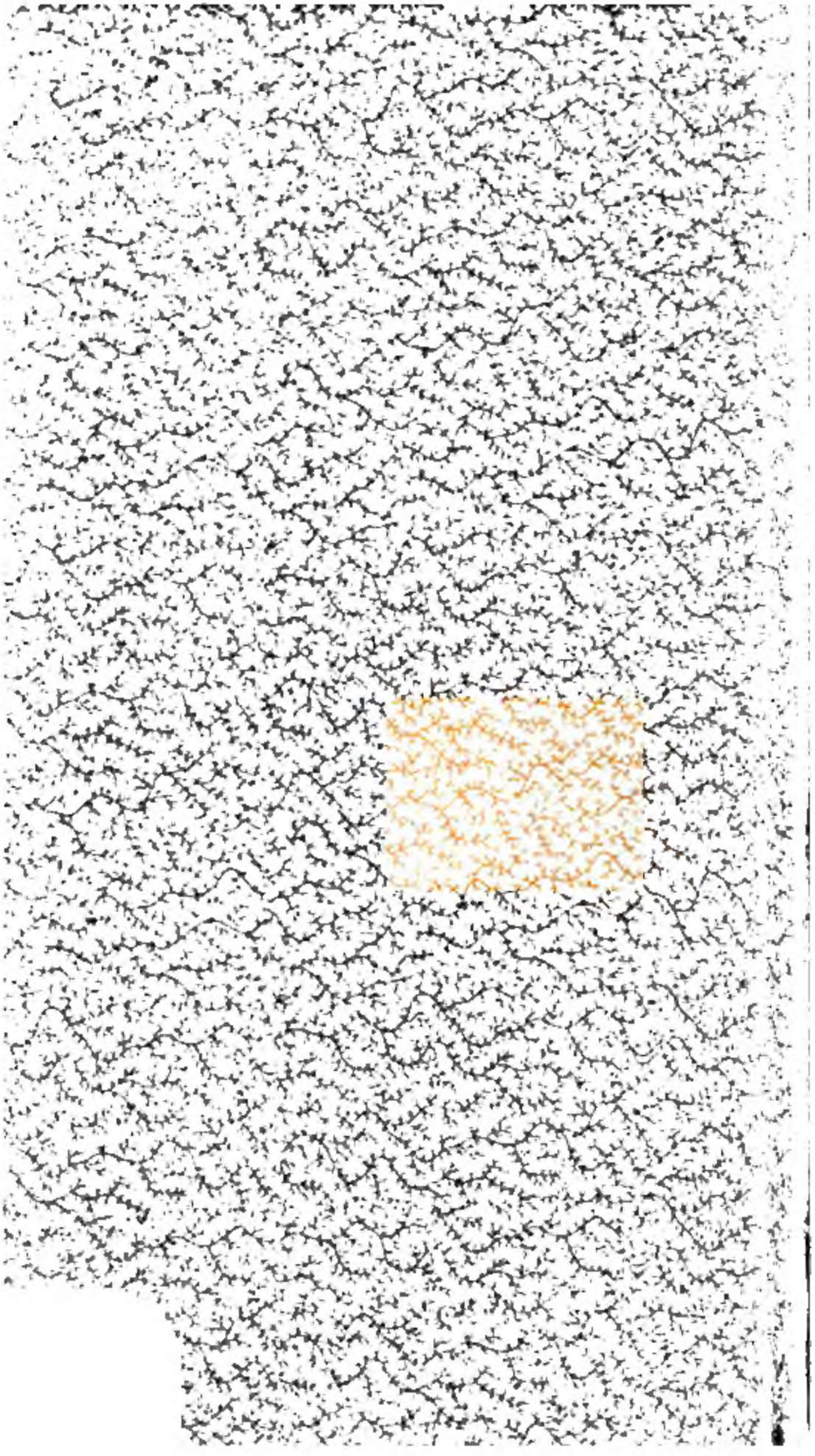
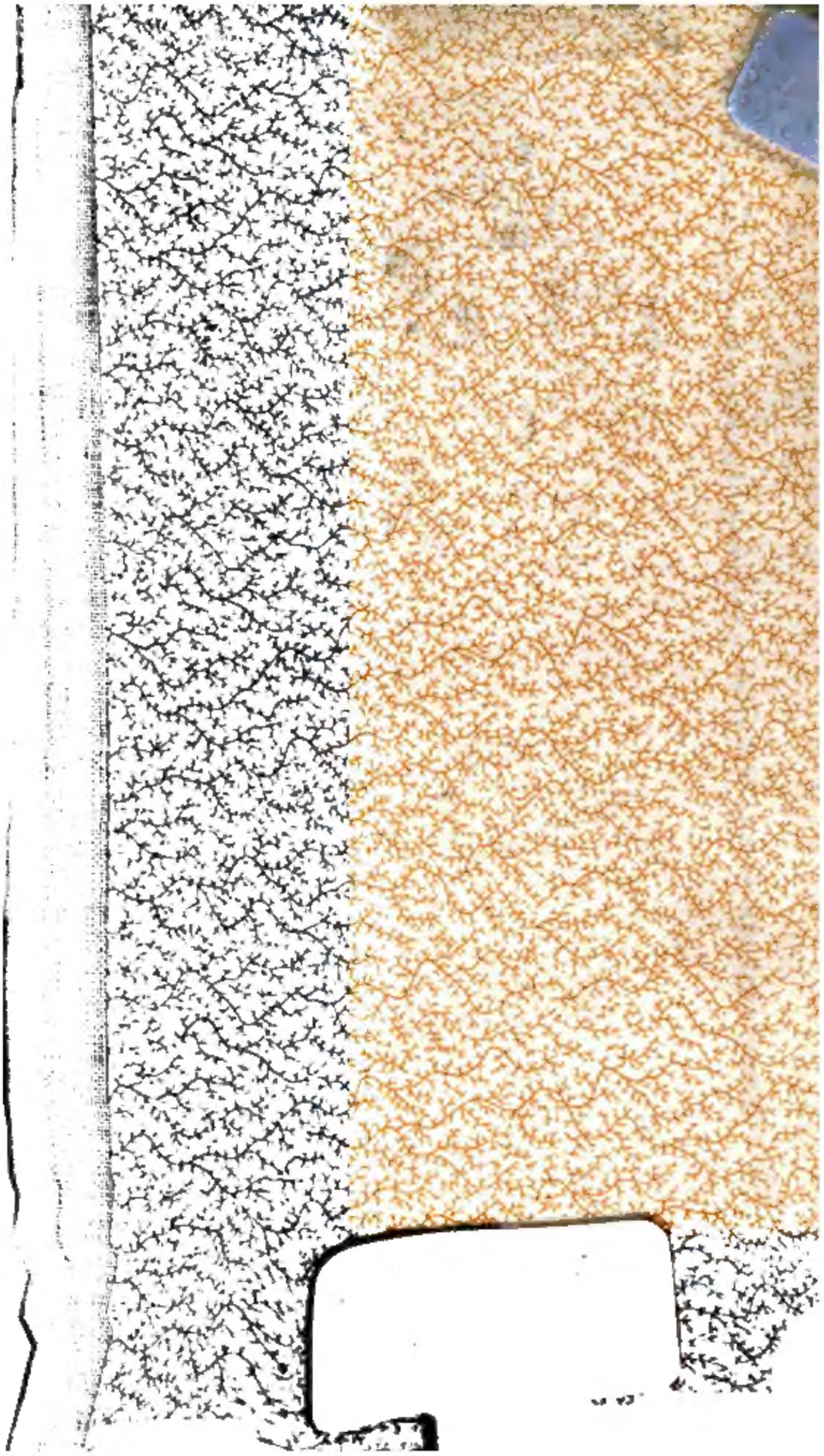
On Thursday we shall finish the preparations for our journey; and either that evening, or Friday morning, will see us on the road to S——; where I already anticipate our reception, in the arms of our dear and amiable friends.

I find a few more particulars to add, before I close this letter. Mrs. Barclay accompanies us to our new habitation; she is our guest, and you must not be offended; the next turn is yours. Lord B—— and Lady Louisa, are allowed to give us their company for one fortnight. I hear that Lord S—— and Mr. Clayton are really gone over to the continent, and intend to go through the Low Countries before they return.

When I recollect the whole of my past adventures within the compass of six months, I am struck with the reflexion of what dangers I have escaped, and what happiness I have attained; I bow my knee with awe and gratitude to the Gracious Power who has enabled me to avoid the first, and to embrace the latter. Oh, my friend! the pleasures of Virtue are the only true plea-

sures; I put myself under her direction for the remainder of my life; every new acquirement in her school, shall only strengthen my resolution to persevere in the pursuit of her rewards: and though I cannot attain to perfection, I will use my utmost endeavours to come as near it as human nature will permit me. Your friendship shall crown my felicity here, and assist me in preparing for a more perfect state hereafter. Sophia salutes you all; with the happiest of men,

EDWARD SAVILLE.

P. S. Mr. Brerewood informs me that Lady Belmour is in the greatest distress; she has anticipated her income, and wants money for her current expences. She has tried several of her disciples, but they turn their back upon her. Even Mr. Munden has refused to assist her; he praises *my* conduct, and condemns hers. Such are the friendships of Vice and Profligacy! there is no reliance but upon the friends of Virtue: if we were only to act with a view to our present happiness, there is no other dependence, either in prosperity or adversity—Virtue is the only thing certain upon earth!

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